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THE

COMMERCE OF INDIA.

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BEING A VIEW OF THE ROUTES
SUCCESSIVELY TAKEN BY THE COMMERCE BETWEEN
EUROPE AND THE EAST,
AND OF THE POLITICAL EFFECTS PRODUCED
BY THE SEVERAL CHANGES.

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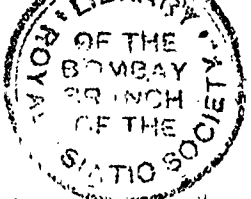

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M. J.

BY HER

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PREFACE.

THE following pages obtained the Le Bas Prize at the University of Cambridge in 1852. It is already some years since they were written, and in consequence certain statements may require a little modification. On the whole, however, the work presents, it is hoped, a fair and comprehensive view of the various changes which have occurred in the routes and character of the commerce between Europe and the distant East. The subject is investigated from the earliest times to the period when the East India Company ceased to be a *trading* community. Where authorities are not given, recourse has been had to such books as *Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, Anderson's History of European Commerce with India, Robertson's Historical Disquisition concerning Ancient India*, &c., &c. The works of standard writers on each particular period have been carefully consulted, but it has not been deemed necessary to adduce their evidence to ordinary and well-authenticated historical facts.

WINDERMERE COLLEGE, *January*, 1858.

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THE COMMERCE OF INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

"In the history of past times the exploits of conquerors who have desolated the earth, and the freaks of tyrants who have rendered nations unhappy, are recorded with minute and often disgusting accuracy, while the discovery of useful arts, and the progress of the most beneficial branches of commerce are, passed over in silence, and suffered to sink into oblivion."—*Robertson's History of India*, p. 59.

To one duly considering it, the history of commerce, above all other history, has a claim upon the attention of mankind. Wherever commerce has flourished, there the people have enjoyed prosperity and plenty, there the arts and sciences have found a more genial soil than in the court of the most polished despot. Civilization and refinement have followed in her train, and (what ought more specially to occupy the attention of the historian) well arranged institutions, securing the rights and property of the subjects, and distributing to each rank of society its proper weight in the state, have grown up under its fostering influence.

Aristotle, one of the deepest thinkers on this subject,

whom antiquity, or perhaps any age, has produced, tells us that Carthage, which was the greatest mercantile city of his day, possessed also the most perfect constitution in the world. In the middle ages, the little republics of Italy, rent though they necessarily were by opposing factions, offered to their citizens more personal liberty than, in those feudal times, was to be enjoyed in other states. In modern days, the model of good government—the safeguard of property—the very asylum of liberty itself—is to be found in our own favoured isle; where the development of a world-wide commerce has attended, or rather produced, the best of constitutions—a constitution which other nations, in despair of surpassing, aim only at equalling.

History has been defined as "philosophy teaching by example:" such philosophy being a consideration of what has been most advantageous for nations and communities. This being the noblest point at which the historian can aim, it has appeared to many a matter of surprise that wars and bloodshed, the coarsest features in the history of mankind, should occupy so large a space, to the exclusion of those more peaceful arts, which have exercised no insignificant effect upon the advancement of the human mind. This perversion of reason, this abasement of the true dignity of history, might not appear strange in the historian of such a people as the Romans, whose trade was war, and under whose military sway commerce flourished but indifferently. It is, however, something surprising to find the chroniclers of Venice, Genoa, and Florence,

communities professedly commercial, carried away with the same madness. To find them expatiating on the paltry military achievements of their fellow citizens—on petty encounters, which were sometimes even bloodless, between warriors so sheathed in steel as to be invulnerable—whilst they have almost entirely neglected the more valuable history of that commerce, by which their small states were exalted during the middle ages to a proud pre-eminence over the empires and kingdoms of Europe. Except from collateral circumstances, and the merest incidental notices of it in their histories, we have scarcely any record of its origin, or of the principles on which it was conducted.

In considering, moreover, any subject which has connection with India, there is one thing which is a matter of regret to all who have studied the affairs of that country. All have lamented that they are so little known, and so little occupy the attention of even those Europeans who owe much of their importance and grandeur to their connection with that distant region. Even in England, although India is by far the largest and most important of all our possessions—though more than one hundred millions of souls are dependent upon us for good government and national prosperity—yet so ill are its affairs and interests understood, that in *Parliament itself* a motion for a debate on Indian affairs—a motion which for many years was rarely made except at the *end* of the session—is but another name for empty benches and an inattentive House.

Whatever contribution, however, may be made to

the history of the connection of European nations with that country deserves some respect, inasmuch as its commerce has been of such a nature as to have invariably enriched those who have engaged in it, and to have given great political importance to the countries in which it has fixed its emporia. With these remarks we shall pass on to the subject of our Essay, and proceed to examine "*the routes successively taken by the commerce between Europe and the East, and the political effects produced by the several changes.*" The most important of these routes have been:

First, by the way of the *Persian Gulf*, to cities on the *Tigris* and *Euphrates*; thence by means of caravans to cities along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean; whence the Tyrians in olden times, and the Venetians and Genoese in the middle ages, transported it to every corner of Europe.

Secondly, by the *Red Sea* to cities in Arabia, and in after times to Alexandria in Egypt, and thence, by the same means as in the first route, it found its way to European emporia.

Thirdly, by the *Cape of Good Hope*, a route which, though longer than either of the preceding, is, owing to the passage being entirely by sea, both so much less expensive and so much more certain, as to have almost entirely superseded the old routes.

Lastly, *direct Overland communication* by means of caravans from city to city: to the south, through Beloochistan and Persia, to the cities of Syria; centrally, through the Balk and Khiva, along the shores of

the Caspian, to the towns on the Euxine; and *lastly*, to the north, through China, across the deserts of Tartary, by way of Kiakta and Maimatschin, to Moscow and the cities of central Europe.

Such have been the several directions in which the rich commodities of the East have been conveyed to the West. To what particular entrepôts they were brought, and what effects they produced upon the fortunes and character of the nations through which they passed, we now proceed to investigate.

CHAPTER II.

COMMERCE WITH INDIA BY WAY OF THE PERSIAN GULF.

"Palmyra for a while stood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of prosperity were sacrificed to a moment of glory."—*Gibbon.*

THE first inkling that we have of the importance of the commerce of the Persian Gulf and the regions bordering on the Euphrates is to be found in Holy Writ. Solomon, we are told, "built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store-cities which he built in Hamath." The foundation of huge caravanserais and commercial depôts, which is the natural meaning to be attached to the word "*store-cities,*" in the valley of Hamath and the oases of the Syrian desert, was to meet the requirements of a vast stream of commerce, which set from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. In after times, we find the cities along the Euphrates and Tigris rising into grandeur and importance, from the manufacture of wool, silk, cotton, dyes, and other raw material of India and the adjacent countries. We may reasonably conjecture that it was this same commerce which, in the days of Solomon, rendered the construction of numerous emporia in the deserts of Syria necessary for its development.

The produce of Arabia and India, which had either

been conveyed overland, or brought up the Persian Gulf, was collected at Babylon, above which the Euphrates,[1] owing to the rapidity of its current, was unnavigable. The wealth and capital which became there accumulated was enormous. Babylon and Nineveh were the Manchester and Birmingham of Mesopotamia. Their protection from hostile nations, or more probably from the nomad inhabitants of the neighbouring deserts,[2] was effected by the construction of immense ramparts, including, in the case of either city, a space of not much less than 1,600 square miles.[3] So vast was the region teeming with manufactures and enriched by Oriental commerce.

Following the course of this commerce to the *West*, we find Syria, at the most remote period to which history reaches, covered with a network of caravan-routes, the nucleus of which was Tadmor.[4] That city,

[1] I question if in ancient times goods were ever absolutely brought *up* the Euphrates in any large quantities. They were always conveyed from Gerrhæ and the neighbourhood by caravans. According to Herodotus, merchandise was brought *down* the river in coracles, &c., but these were carried back by asses. The boats which bring provisions down the Danube to Vienna never return.

[2] There can be little doubt but the Chasidim or Chaldæans were, like the present possessors of Mesopotamia, of Arab descent. This will fully account for their plundering propensities. Herodotus represents the inhabitants of the two sides of the river within the very walls of the city as engaged in mutual robbery. (Lib. i. 186.)

[3] Babylon was a square, each side of which was 120 stadia, or about forty miles, in length. Major Rennel does, I am aware, materially diminish the magnitude usually ascribed to the stadium, yet still, after all deductions, the district enclosed within regular, well-constructed fortifications was something immense.

[4] Robertson's India, p. 56.

situated on a verdant oasis in the heart of the desert, at a distance of not more than eighty miles from the Euphrates, possessed neither natural wealth nor manufactures, which could render it a mart for merchandise. It owed its importance then, as in after times, solely to its situation on the commercial route from the East to West. From the Euphrates goods were conveyed to Tadmor, and there sorted and arranged for their final journey across the desert. One portion of them proceeded to the south of Palestine, to be thence conveyed to Petra, and even to Egypt itself. Another part went through the north of Syria to Asia Minor, whilst a third portion reached the cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose enterprising merchants exported them, even in the time of Solomon, to the most distant shores of the Mediterranean. The character and effects of the commerce of Tyre are investigated in a separate chapter. We may remark, in passing, that there is reason to conclude that the destruction of that city by Nebuchadnezzar had for its object the extension of the Indian commerce of the Euphrates, and the consequent aggrandisement of the cities of Syria and Mesopotamia to the detriment of that which came up the Red Sea, and enriched the cities of Idumæa and Southern Palestine, cities which were never subject to Babylonian rule.

The importance of this branch of commerce next arrests our attention in the age of the Seleucidæ. Those enlightened monarchs gave every encouragement to the trade with India. The grand end which Alexander had proposed to his conquests was, to make Babylon the

emporium for all the traffic of the Persian Gulf, and Alexandria for that of the Red Sea. It was reserved for Seleucus in Asia, and Ptolemy in Africa, to carry out his favourite scheme. For reasons with which we are not well acquainted, but probably from some change in the course or current of the stream,[1] Babylon was found but ill adapted for the emporium of the Euphrates. About forty-five miles to the north was built, in its stead, *Seleucia*, on the western bank of the Tigris. For several centuries it was the capital of the Grecian Empire in Upper Asia. A great campaign in India was undertaken by Seleucus against King Sandracottus, which was productive of the happiest results. The Macedonians penetrated as far as the Ganges, and a close alliance was formed with the Indian sovereign, which probably lasted until the fall of the Seleucidæ, and was fostered by mutual presents and embassies. The commercial intercourse between Seleucia and the East was permanently established. A dynasty of Greeks ruled in Bactria, and the frequent discovery of

[1] In no ancient author, as far as I am aware, is there any substantial reason given for the Oriental trade deserting Babylon for Seleucia. The cause alleged in the text appears most probable, and will be appreciated by those who have directed their attention to the immense changes produced in a level country by the silting up of particular channels, and the formation of dykes for drainage or irrigation, as was largely practised in Assyria. Even the changes in the course of the Euphrates and Tigris, which are recorded, are something astonishing. In the time of Herodotus, and for several succeeding ages, the two rivers emptied themselves into the Persian Gulf by distinct mouths, situated at the distance of some leagues from one another. Consider, too, the alterations which geology teaches us have taken place at the deltas of all great rivers.

their coins throughout the whole of Northern India attests the wide extent of their commerce, if not of their dominion.[1]

For many years after the breaking up of the Macedonian Empire in Asia, Seleucia retained the genuine characteristics of its Greek origin, and, amid surrounding anarchy, preserved the appearance of order and government. It became an independent republic, governed by a senate of 300 nobles. Its inhabitants numbered 600,000, and were celebrated for their refinement, their valour, and their love of freedom. The strength of their fortifications bid defiance to the rude attacks of the Parthian cavalry, though civil dissension and the madness of a falling faction sometimes introduced the common foe.

In the midst of her prosperity, however, were engendered the seeds of her ruin. Induced by the excellence of the situation, or, more probably, by its commercial advantages, the Imperial camp of the Parthian monarchs, who, at the summit of their power, did not disdain occasionally to imitate the habits of their nomad forefathers, was not unfrequently pitched at *Ctesiphon*, on the opposite bank of the Tigris, at the distance of but three miles from Seleucia. It was thus that the immense camp of the Great Mogul migrated from city to city along the Jumna or the Ganges. It was thus that the silken pavilions of Cyrus and his successors were annually spread, after the manner of their Persian

[1] For account of Bactrian Kingdom in India, see Elphinstone's Hist. p. 244. Heeren's Manual of Ancient Hist., &c.

forebears, at Pasargadæ,[1] or Persepolis, in the heart of their native land, near the tombs and palaces of their shepherd-ancestors. As Delhi and Persepolis from stationary camps became important cities, so Ctesiphon, from a small village, grew into a populous city, the rival of Seleucia itself; and after the terrible devastation which that city twice endured from the Romans, first under Marcus Aurelius, and afterwards under Severus, absolutely usurped its commerce and importance. The apostate Julian, in his Persian expedition, encamped in a ruined suburb, and found that the sole remains of the Greek colony had resumed the Assyrian name, manners, and language; and together with Ctesiphon, to which they were united by a bridge of boats, formed *Al Modayn*, or the cities, which was then, as in after ages, the winter residence of the Sassanidæ. It was strongly fortified by walls built of the same material as those of Babylon, and the approaches defended by the waters of the river as well as impracticable morasses.

During the period which elapsed between the expedition of Julian and the invasion of the Saracens, Ctesiphon would appear to have enjoyed, uninterrupted, the blessings of a rich commerce. To this cause, and to the possession of some other towns of similar character, must be attributed that wealth of the Parthian monarchs which was so conspicuous as

[1] For some interesting remarks on Pasargadæ, which means encampment of the Persians, and is the same place as Persepolis, or the city of the Persians, see Appendices iii., v., and vi., in Heeren's Asiatic Researches.

to be the subject of constant reference in Greek and Roman authors.

When at length the provinces of Persia fell in rapid succession before the conquering Moslems, the vast defences of Modayn, manned as they were by traitors and cowards, offered but a feeble resistance. Said, the lieutenant of Omar, took it by assault, and the sabre was deeply died in Christian blood. Abulfeda, and the writers who have described its capture, labour in enumerating the magnitude and variety of the wealth which fell to the share of the Saracens. The warriors of the desert were enriched beyond all that they could imagine or desire. "One historian," says Gibbon, "defines the untold and almost infinite mass, by the fabulous computation of *three thousands of thousands of thousands of pieces of gold.*" The regal insignia of the Great King, the tiara, the cuirass, the belt, and the bracelets of Chosroes, remind us of the gorgeous robes of the Great Mogul, and the peacock-throne of Delhi, as they are described by Roe or Tavernier. Wardrobes of countless price, costly furniture, hangings, and carpets, silken garments, an incredible amount of precious stones, gold and silver, and great store of camphor, and similar commodities from the Indian islands, reveal the importance of its intercourse with the distant East.

The veterans of Omar usurped the palaces, but not the commerce of its former possessors. After a few years, offended with its situation, they removed to the western side of the Euphrates, and founded Cufa; which, though a considerable town, never aspired to

the grandeur of its predecessor. In a country like Assyria, destitute of timber and stone, the most solid edifices are necessarily constructed of perishable materials. Of the wide expanse of habitations contained within the walls of ancient Babylon and Nineveh, there barely remains more than the platforms of the temple of Belus, and the palace of Sennacherib; the sole relic of the myriad halls and bazaars of Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Al Modayn, are the shapeless ruins of the halls of Chosroes.

Such was the fate of Babylon and its successors, and such, with but little variation, has been the fate of the majority of the great cities of Syria, which, in former times, owed their splendour to an Oriental commerce. Of these, the emporium, the most important, and the nearest to Seleucia, was Tadmor.

Under its Greecized name, "Palmyra,"[1] which, as well as Tadmor, is descriptive of its position in a spot adorned with *palm* trees, was still the point from which diverged the caravan-routes of the desert. Under a republican form of government, a form which appears to have always been best suited to the genius of a commercial nation, as well as from its inaccessible position in the desert, it retained its independence in every contest which occurred among the ambitious monarchs by whom it was surrounded. Under the Syrian kings, the descendants of Seleucus, and under the Roman emperors, it attained its highest splendour,

[1] For the account of Palmyra, I am chiefly indebted to Gibbon and Heeren.

and temples, and porticoes, and streets of palaces of unparalleled magnificence, arose, and have left ruins, which modern travellers tell us vie in imposing majesty with the temples of Karnak and Luxor.

The fortunes of an independent city, which in ancient times rose by its trade alone to such magnificence, and, in consequence of an alteration in the caravan-routes between Syria and the Euphrates, fell into decay so complete that its very name was forgotten, demands more than a passing notice.

Indian commodities, which had been brought to Babylon, and in after times to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, were conveyed northwards two or three days' journey to *Volugesia* on the Euphrates, and thence transported to Palmyra. This portion of the route, although constantly frequented, would appear to have been one of remarkable danger. There still exist inscriptions to commemorate the success of the captains of caravans, or *synodiarchs*, as they are styled, who had accomplished this passage with safety. As the absolute existence of Palmyra depended on the regular and safe arrival of her caravans, many of which traversed regions beset with wild Arabs, or professed bandits, their protection was the especial care of her magistrates, and public honours were unsparingly bestowed upon those by whose enterprise or liberality they had been safely conducted to their destination at perilous times.

That the structures devoted to the purposes of business should be spacious and commodious in a city founded as a commercial emporium, is what we should

naturally expect. Those of Palmyra, however, were on a scale so vast and magnificent, as almost to baffle the imagination. The Rialto of Venice, the Royal Exchange, and the Bourses of France and the Netherlands, sink into insignificance when compared with the *Court of Camels* at Palmyra. A huge square, each side of which is nearly 700 feet in length, was surrounded with a piazza supported by a double peristyle of about 100 pillars, the capitals of which were carved in the most delicate and beautiful manner. Behind these the walls were adorned with sculptures, statues, and fluted pilasters of similarly exquisite workmanship, between each of which were the entrances to a series of apartments of various dimensions. The entrance to the whole building was through a noble portico, of the stateliness of which we may form some idea from the two stones which supported the sides of the great gate, each of which was thirty-five feet high, and beautifully sculptured with vines and clusters of grapes, the boldness of which indicate the hand of no mean artist. On entering, the traveller was refreshed by the sight of two tanks of the purest and the coolest water. The whole court was paved with marble, and in the centre rose a lofty temple dedicated to Baal, or the Sun. The whole of this stupendous structure, with the exception of a narrow passage for an entry, was for protection, surrounded with a deep ditch faced with stone, which made it difficult to assail.

Such was the magnificent caravanserai which awaited the merchants from Volugesia and Seleucia. Its spacious

court supplied with abundance of water, afforded room for the beasts of burden, whilst the adjoining apartments, and the cool portico adorned with statues and inscriptions to enterprising citizens and successful *synodiarchs*, furnished the merchant with a magnificent bazaar for the exposition and sale of his commodities. In the neighbouring temple of Jupiter Belus, was rendered by the Syrian to Baal, and the Greek to Jove, the hymn of thanksgiving, or the votive offering. It is thus in the East that an intimate connection has ever existed between religion and commerce. The pilgrims of Mecca and Jerusalem always journey with their wares, as much merchants as devotees, and in India and Persia, a feast and a fair are correlative terms. It is probable that the "sellers of doves, and the money-changers" at Jerusalem, in the courts[1] of Jehovah, were imitating the customs which they had practised unrebuked in the temples of the Sun at Heliopolis, Emesa, and Palmyra.

The Court of Camels, vast as it was, would appear by the ruins to have been equalled, if not surpassed, by similar edifices. One portico in particular is remarked as having been little less than a mile in length, and throughout its whole extent, supported on pillars with capitals of the most exquisite workmanship. There

[1] There was a great similarity between the general arrangement of the courts of the temple at Palmyra and that at Jerusalem. The Jews exercised the mercantile profession throughout Syria and the neighbouring countries. According to Josephus, many thousands of them were resident in Damascus. From the inscriptions we learn that statues to some of the nation were erected in Palmyra. See Heeren, A. R., vol. ii., p. 405.

can be little doubt that these buildings, whose magnitude is still to be traced in their remains, were but the types of many others constructed on a smaller scale, and of more perishable materials. Such were the extensive structures provided for the purposes of commerce. What a stupendous idea do they give us of the carrying-trade of the Syrian desert! How wonderful, how fairy-like must have been the scene in that little verdant oasis, when these splendid bazaars, palaces, and temples were still standing; when thousands of the camels of Nedjed[1] and swift dromedaries were dispersed around; when Greek and Roman, Jew and Persian, Tyrian and Bactrian, merchants of every race and every country, celebrated in history or song, came in myriads to that island of the desert, not for war or deeds of barbarism and blood, but to advance the intercourse of nations, the arts of peace, and the blessings of civilization. Examine the dark page of Oriental history—that record of despotism and crime, of the rapid rise and more rapid fall of worthless empires—and the brightest speck—the noblest state of all the East—the Queen of the Desert—the abode of Longinus and Zenobia—was the city of the Palmyrenes.

With a few exceptions, the inscriptions at Palmyra all belong to the age of the Antonines. The splendid structures we have been just describing, together with that vast extension of her commerce which rendered them necessary, are usually referred to the same date. The question will naturally arise, what was the peculiar

[1] The camels of Nedjèd, the southern part of the Syrian desert, have always been celebrated for their excellency.

position of the Asiatic provinces, which produced such a result? Appian[1] informs us that the great trade was with the Romans and the Parthians, and that through this channel a considerable portion of the Roman empire was supplied with the productions of India. Heeren[2] upon this subject remarks, that—

"Upon Adrian's spontaneously restoring to the Parthians the provinces which had been taken from them by Trajan, the protracted war between that people and the Romans was followed by a tranquil state of affairs, which lasted all through the reign of Antoninus Pius, and consequently for upwards of forty years. That during this long interval of peace, as was natural, the arts also of peace were cultivated, magnificent buildings erected, and an additional stimulus given to the commercial intercourse of Asia, particularly now that a free passage was allowed to merchants travelling through the Parthian territories. In the absence of almost all the contemporary historians, a sufficient degree of light is thrown upon the subject by the monumental inscriptions of Palmyra, for enabling us to understand how that, in common with other cities of Syria, attained such an eminent degree of splendour, owing to the vast increase of wealth, consequent upon commercial speculation."

We have said that Palmyra was an independent state. Situated in the midst of a vast sandy desert, in which armies could not well subsist for its reduction, a wealthy

[1] "Palmyreni, mercatores sunt, qui merces ab Arabibus ac Parthis coemtas, Romanis iterum vendunt."—*De Bellis Civilibus*, lib. v. See also Pliny, Hist. Nat., vi. 31.

[2] Asiatic R., vol. ii. 397.

frontier town between the Parthian and Roman empires, this was necessarily its condition. From the inscriptions, however, several of which are in honour of Roman procurators, we learn that, although governed by its own senate and laws, it was sometimes nominally the subject of the latter power. That the yoke was but light, we may gather from the words of Pliny, "Palmyra, privatâ sorte utitur inter duo imperia summa, Romanorum Parthorumque, et prima in discordiâ utrinque cura." As was the case in the time of the Seleucidæ, it was a state, which the neighbouring nations made it their ambition to court and caress, and its freedom, as well the grandeur of its commerce, was due no less to its situation than to its strict neutrality.

In these circumstances, we have the key to the extraordinary events, which occurred in the third century of the Christian era. Sapor, the Persian, after devastating the richest provinces of the East, was returning to the Euphrates, leading with him the captive Valerian, the only emperor of Rome who had fallen into the hands of the enemy, when cohorts of the Palmyrenes, under the command of Odenathus, one of their noblest and most opulent senators, ventured to oppose the conqueror, at whose very name the whole East trembled. They hovered over the host of the great king, routed his outposts, cut off his supplies, seized his treasure, and, what was still more precious, his *seraglio;* and compelled him to repass the Euphrates, "if not in absolute flight, at any rate with undignified speed." The majesty of Rome, insulted by a Persian, was vindicated by a Palmyrene,

and Odenathus was actually decorated with the imperial purple. We have the solution of the enigma that a single city, situated on an oasis, but a few miles in circumference, and in the midst of the great desert of Syria, should hold sway over Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, and a great part of Asia Minor: and that its queen, Zenobia, should contend with one of the most warlike Roman emperors for the dominion of the East.

From the account of the plunder, which was made by the army of Aurelian, when that monarch took the city and captured Zenobia, we ascertain how well it was stocked with Indian merchandise. Besides great store of horses, and camels, and military accoutrements, immense treasure of precious stones and gold was found, and, what in that age was scarcely less inferior in value, great quantities of *silk and cotton goods* fell to the share of the conquerors.[1]

Aurelian, after its capture, treated the city with great consideration, but provoked by its rebellion in 273 A. D., wreaked his vengeance upon it. After this, its trade, partly owing to its fallen condition, but mainly in consequence of the discovery of the new route to India by the monsoons (which we shall presently describe), appears to have deserted it, and in the words of Gibbon—"The seat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia, gradually sunk into an obscure town, a trifling fortress, and at length a miserable village. The present citizens of Palmyra, consisting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the spacious court of a magnificent temple."

[1] Appian de Bell. Civil., lib. v.

But let us pursue *westwards* the further course of the India trade—that Pactolus among the streams of commerce, which enriched every country through which it flowed. From Palmyra, there ran towards the west three grand commercial routes, which are well denoted by the cities which grew opulent by their trade, and declined when it was withdrawn. In a northerly direction, goods were conveyed through Emesa to Epiphania, the ancient Hamath. Thence they were either taken by land, or, as is more probable, floated down the Orontes, through the whole length of what was called the Plain of Syria, to Antioch. Thence, some went seawards to Greece, and the islands of the Ægean, whilst others were exchanged against the productions of Asia Minor, and transported by land to the interior, through the Syrian, Cilician, and Pamphylian Gates.

On the *first* of these routes, Hems or *Emesa*, the greatest emporium after leaving Palmyra, was the metropolis of the plain, as Heliopolis was of the valley of Syria, and from very early times to the invasion of the Saracens, was a wealthy and flourishing city. Although a few broken columns are all that now mark its position, under the Macedonian and Roman rule it was noted for the number and magnificence of its buildings. The Temple of the Sun equalled in loftiness, if not in extent, that at Palmyra, and a poetic geographer[1] compares its height to that of Mount Libanus itself.

"Libanus frondosa cacumina turget,
Et tamen bis certant celsi fastigia templi."

[1] Rufus Avienus, the translator of Dionysius.

Hamath, the next entrepôt, was already an important place in the time of David; was rendered commodious for traffic by Solomon; and though but rarely mentioned, appears, under its Greek name of Epiphania, to have been a considerable town to the time of the Saracens.

The towns of the plain of Syria, along the whole course of the Orontes, from Hamath to Antioch, were celebrated for their number and opulence. Antioch, Apamæa, Beræa (the ancient Haleb, and the modern Aleppo), Hierapolis, Chalcis, and Seleucia (the present Latakia), were all connected with the trade of the Orontes: all grew into importance under the Seleucidæ and Antonines, when, as we have shown, the trade of the East was most fully developed; all declined when the victories of the Saracens, and a change in the course of Oriental commerce, withdrew that rich stream from the Orontes. The splendour of their prosperity may be conjectured from their opulence when already in decline. The city of Chalcis[1] propitiated the fury of the Saracen Caled, and preserved itself from the fire and sword of the Moslems, by a ransom of five thousand ounces of gold, five thousand ounces of silver, two thousand robes of silk, and as many figs and olives as would load five thousand asses. Such were the resources of one of the less important towns of Syria, in an age when the precious metals represented a greater value than in our day, and when the standard price of silk was its weight in gold.

Antioch, under the Byzantine emperors, was made the

[1] Gibbon, ii. 294.

capital of their Eastern dominions, and was decorated with the titles of *holy, inviolate, independent.*[1] Surrounded with extensive fortifications, considerable remains of which still exist, she underwent a series of vicissitudes often as strange as they were dreadful. Punished for sedition—degraded to a second-rate city—devastated by earthquakes—rebuilt by emperors—taken and retaken by Moslem and Christian—yielding to Dames, and his handful of barbarous followers, and again unconquered by a host of a hundred thousand well-appointed troops—lastly, captured by the warriors of the Cross, and owing her safety to the miracle of the "Holy Lance," that strangest delusion of a strange age—her annals form one of the most romantic episodes of history. In the midst of all her misfortunes it was her position towards the mouth of the Orontes, and the traffic of Syria, which derived its activity from the Eastern trade from Palmyra, which preserved her from utter destruction. Since the Middle Ages, however, her trade, no longer excited and confirmed by rich caravans from the Euphrates, has gradually declined. Aleppo now engrosses the whole of the paltry commerce, which is conducted on the Orontes, and its port, Latakia, is the only outlet for the productions of the plain of Syria.

Another, and the *most direct* course by which the merchants of Palestine reached the Mediterranean, was through *Heliopolis*, the cities of Cœle-Syria, and thence

[1] An edict of Julius Cæsar's begins, "Ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τῇ μητροπόλει ἱερᾷ καὶ ἀσύλῳ καὶ αὐτονόμῳ καὶ ἀρχούσῃ καὶ προκαθημένῃ τῆς ἀνατολῆς, κ.τ.λ."

to Tyre, Sidon, Aradus, and the whole of the sea-ports of Phœnicia and Palestine.

The most important, if not the only emporium on this short route was Heliopolis, the modern Baalbec, the capital of the fertile valley, that lay between Libanus and Antilibanus Like Emesa and Palmyra, it was long remarkable for its wealth and grandeur, and the size and splendour of its public and private buildings. The predominant worship was that of Baal or the Sun, and, until the devastation of a recent earthquake, the ruins of a temple in the Corinthian order of architecture, adorned with sculptures of a very bold and natural description, attested either the munificence of an Antonine or the piety and refinement of the merchant princes of Assyria.[1] In the height of her prosperity, the capital of the East did not disdain to rifle its edifices for ornaments, richer and more magnificent than her own resources could supply. The noblest columns of the Mosque of St. Sophia were obtained by Justinian from the temple of the Sun at Baalbec. The withering rule of the Moslem, combined with the loss of her traffic, have reduced her to a paltry village. The wandering Bedoween pitch their tents amid her prostrate columns, and by a never failing

[1] John Malala, in his *Chronicon*, gives a list of the public buildings erected by the Roman emperors in Syria, and among them a temple at Heliopolis by Antoninus Pius. See Heeren's A. R., ii. 397. Abulfeda ascribes the temples at Heliopolis to the A'dites. Gibbon (ii. 295) sneers at this, but needlessly, for Abulfeda, it has recently been discovered, was capable of reading A'dite inscriptions, which are in a language now unknown, and he may have seen at Heliopolis other edifices than those of the age of the Antonines.

explanation ascribe the construction of her palaces to the arts of the *genii*.

The *third* route from Palmyra to the westward terminated at *Petra*. Its course through a desert almost in any direction capable of being traversed by caravans, must have been subject to frequent changes. Though the exigencies of trade would occasionally lead caravans directly across the desert to Petra, or at any rate to Bosra, the following would appear in general to have been the course of the main branch.

The first great entrepot after Palmyra was *Damascus*. Thence goods were conveyed to the numerous towns of Ituræa, Trachonitis, and Decapolis. A large portion found their way to Bosra, and from Bosra through Gerasa and Philadelphia to the great mart of Petra, or to Egypt, which by this route were furnished with those Eastern commodities which the merchants from Elath, from a variety of causes, were unable to supply.

In consequence of the richness of its soil and the mildness and salubrity of its climate, Syria has always teemed with a wealthy population. Hence, in the poetic geography of Dionysius, ὄλβιος and πολύπτολις are its standard epithets.[1] Even in later times, when invaded by Timur, we are informed, that besides their walled cities, the Syrian *emirs* ruled over the astonishing number of *sixty thousand* villages. The demand which in such a country must in every age have existed for the merchandise of the East, will lead us to conjecture, from another point, the vastness of the caravan trade of

[1] See Gibbon, ii. 294, 525.

Palmyra. Damascus, the emporium for Syria, from a very remote period has been a considerable town, and still exists, notwithstanding the awful devastation which it has suffered from Saracen and Tartar. As, however, its celebrity is due more to the excellence of its situation on the fertile banks of a number of small streams, which are collected into a beautiful lake, and two of which, the Abana and Pharphar, enjoy a Scripture renown, than to its Indian commerce (though this produced its effect), we shall confine our attention to the depots between it and Petra. These all, like Palmyra, owed their very existence to commerce, and on its withdrawal resumed their desert solitude. Like all the mercantile cities of Syria, their period of greatest magnificence was the age of the Antonines. The towns in the region of Decapolis, but especially Gadara, which were considerable places even at the Christian era, attained *then* their highest splendour. This fact, but indistinctly noticed by historians, is clearly attested by their extensive remains, the ruins of superb temples, tombs, and amphitheatres. Further south, Bosra, Gerasa, Philadelphia, and lastly Petra, which is described in another chapter—all towns on the very margin of the desert—grew into an importance, which they retained as long as they were subject to the Eastern Empire. Frontier cities, they were surrounded with strong fortifications, but as they were the first to meet, so they were the first to yield, to that impetuous flood of Arab warriors, that desolated the fairest provinces of the Byzantine Empire. They were the

first, too, to feel, in the ruin of their trade, the effects of the deluge which their cowardice and pusillanimity had suffered to pass into Syria. They all flourished in the same age, their architectural remains all exhibit the same character, the names of the Antonines repeatedly occur on their monuments, and their prosperity was due to the same causes which contributed to the elevation of Palmyra, Emesa, and Heliopolis.

The works of the historians contemporary with the Antonines have, by some strange fatality, nearly all perished; so that of the reigns of those who were probably the best and most enlightened of all who ever wore the imperial purple, we possess absolutely the fewest memorials. As far as our subject is concerned, their loss is more especially to be regretted, as we have been almost entirely thrown back on conjecture, and mutilated, or but partially deciphered monuments, for the history of the political relations between the Romans and the Parthians. There remain but the barest notices of a commerce, which for more than forty years, through the reigns of the Antonines, flowed from the furthest east to the most distant tribes of Germany and Britain. Consider the well-known policy of those illustrious monarchs, perhaps the first of all the Roman emperors, who really preferred the triumphs of peace to the successes of war; who diffused order not only throughout the whole Roman Empire, but in the remotest regions in which the influence of their power, or the force of their example made itself felt. Consider the flourishing condition of the Roman Empire,

which so excited the envy and admiration of neighbouring states, that, according to Appian, it was no unusual circumstance for the ambassadors of foreign states to solicit, and solicit in vain, the honour of becoming Roman subjects. Consider this addition of the two Antonines and Hadrian, their immediate predecessor, to all the arts of peace, and the huge demand which must of necessity have arisen for Oriental commodities: with all these connect the singular fact, unrecorded in Greek or Latin authors, but chronicled by the historians of China, that Marcus Antoninus, to render more secure the mercantile intercourse with the distant East, absolutely despatched an embassy to the imperial court of Pekin,[1] and we may form some conception of that commerce, which was so vast and important, that its development filled a desert with populous and magnificent cities.

[1] Robertson's Dissertation on India, p. 91.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMMERCE OF INDIA BY WAY OF THE RED SEA.

"And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom."—1 Kings, ix. 26.

At no date, to which historical records take us back, does the commercial intercourse between different parts of the world appear to have been compressed within narrow limits. We find that in all ages products have found their way from their native soil to the most distant people, who have had anything to give in exchange for them. Even at the present day, a wider range of commerce is indicated by the various and numerous products which enter into our daily consumption, than could possibly be inferred from the evidence of written records. This will account for the fact, that from the very earliest memorials of the India trade, we are led to conjecture that in local extent, though not in magnitude, it was almost as wide-spread as it was in the time of the Romans.

Along the whole of the southern coast of Arabia, but more especially at Hadramaut and Aden, at the entrance of the Red Sea, are found the scattered ruins of a people, who had been long extinct even in the time of

Mahomet. These were the children of A'd, a tradition of whose destruction is preserved in the Kuran. That they were opulent and civilized is attested by their monuments. On these are inscriptions in a character at present unknown, but in the age of the early Caliphs capable of being deciphered by the learned. Arabic translations of them exist, and from these we gather the fact, that it was an extensive commerce, which, in times, when the antiquity of Greece and Rome had scarce begun, enriched this portion of Arabia.

The very earliest remains which are found in a neighbouring country bear out this idea. In the deepest obscurity of Egyptian history we find her monarchs, Sesostris and Rameses, sailing down the Arabian Gulf, and attacking with success a powerful maritime people. Architectural monuments were adorned with representations of these victories. On the walls of the Memnonium, on the vast *propylon* of the temple of Luxor, and on the two magnificent obelisks of red granite at Karnak, we find representations of sea-fights with men, who, to judge from their physiognomy, are of Arab descent. Doubtless in those obscure records, which have puzzled the deepest-read of Egyptian antiquaries, we scan the fate of the great maritime nation of Arabia—the fabled Aditic race—from which, in after times, sprang the Hamyari, the Homerites of the Romans.

When further researches, which are being at present undertaken, shall have revealed to us more of the records of this unknown people, we have little doubt that it will be found that our conjecture is correct;

that they are the enemy whose conquest is represented on almost every considerable Egyptian monument, from Ipsambul in Nubia down to Denderah. It was an event which was plainly an epoch in Egyptian history, as remarkable and important as the Trojan war is in that of Greece, and, like it, furnished the painter and sculptor with abundant subjects for their respective arts.

If we inquire further about this commercial nation, we shall learn that other monuments of them are to be found along the eastern arm of the Red Sea; in the "*written mountains*" of Idumæa, which are covered with their inscriptions, and there is not wanting evidence which conclusively connects them with the Tyrians themselves.

We can now give some rational account of the wars which were waged against them by that great Egyptian monarch, who is known under the name of Rameses or Sesostris,[1] for Egyptian scholars are universally agreed that the two heroes are identical. We gather from Herodotus and other sources, that he encouraged immensely the trade of Egypt—that he constructed canals throughout the length and breadth of the land, especially one (the remains of which are visible at the

[1] Some imagine that the Sesostris, to whom such numerous victories and wide-spread conquests are ascribed, lived about the fourth dynasty. The Sesostris, however, to whom *naval* victories, and the system of canals, joining the Nile and the Red Sea, with all the more important cities of Egypt, are attributed, would appear, both from the monuments and from history to belong to a much later period, and probably to the eighteenth dynasty. Wilkinson, among others, leans to the opinion, that he is identical with Rameses III.

present day) from the top of the Red Sea to the Nile—that he overcame the prejudices of the Egyptians with regard to the sea, and induced them to engage in foreign commerce. Viewed in this light, his expedition against the Arabians is no longer, what it has been so often represented, the mad freak of an insensate tyrant. It was a violent attempt to divert the stream of Indian commerce, which was flowing through Idumæa, from the eastern to the western arm of the Red Sea, and by this means to give Egypt a share in the advantages arising therefrom.

If our conjectures on this subject be correct, we may justly admire the enlightened policy of that ancient monarch. When Thebes was still in its splendour, ages before the pyramids themselves were reared, he attempted that, which conferred on Alexander greater glory than all his conquests, and that, which has been considered one of the most prudent and far-sighted measures of Bonaparte himself.

There exist, however, other notices of the ancient traffic of the children of Yemen up the Elanitic Gulf. Whatever theory be embraced with regard to the Book of Job; whether it be, or be not, the history of a real individual, there can be little doubt that the author was acquainted with this portion of Arabia. We cannot but remark the frequent reference which he makes to commerce and manufactures.

Later still, we find Midianites journeying across the South of Canaan, with merchandise for Egypt, from which circumstance we can conjecture by what means

that country was supplied with Oriental commodities. Selah or Petra, for the names are synonymous, was the centre of the caravan routes of Arabia, as Tadmor was of Syria and Mesopotamia. Thither Indian commodities, which had been brought by sea to Elath, found their way, and were thence transported to Egypt. When we consider the opulence of that country, and the immense demand which there was for the productions of India and Southern Arabia, owing to their practice of embalming, can we wonder that a powerful monarch like Sesostris should attempt to render the Egyptian trade with India more direct?

The next notice which we have of this route completely identifies it with the trade of Tyre. We have already observed how Solomon carried on an Eastern commerce by way of Tadmor; it was, however, by "*Elath, at the sea side in the land of Edom,*"[1] that his chief wealth was derived. From that port, in conjunction with Hiram, who was (observe) king of Tyre, he despatched vessels to Ophir, which returned after so long and so prosperous a voyage, that there can be little doubt but they penetrated to some portion of India.

From the prophets, especially from Isaiah and Ezekiel, we gather that the merchants of Idumæa, some centuries later, were still celebrated for their wealth and importance. If we turn to profane authors, we find Nabatæa, *i.e.*, the country of Nebaioth, considered as the source of all the precious commodities of the East. We

[1] 2 Chron. viii. 17.

find that in all ages caravans from Minea, in the interior of Arabia, from Gerrha on the Persian Gulf, from Hadramaut on the ocean, pointed to Petra as a common centre, and thence their trade branched off in every direction. Its further route is to be learnt from Strabo and Agatharchides. The former tells us, that from Petra it was brought to Rhinocolura, a small town at the south-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, and thence in Tyrian vessels was carried into every part of the known world.

The political importance which, owing to her commerce, Idumæa once possessed, might be learnt from history, even if the ruins of Petra did not sufficiently attest her ancient grandeur. Until the time of Trajan, though surrounded by warlike and ambitious monarchs, she preserved her independence. If she did not actually conquer the Arabs, at any rate she was their leading state, and her rulers have been called the "Kings of Arabia." With regard to the Tyrians, it is notorious that it was from this particular trade that they derived a considerable portion of that wealth for which they were so conspicuous.

We pass on to consider the next channel in which the commerce of the Red Sea flowed. We have seen the attempts which Sesostris made to bring it into the Heroopolitic Gulf, and the vast expedition which he undertook for this purpose. We can now account for a singular anomaly in the career of Alexander. That prince had determined that the commerce of India should flow through Egypt. This it would be

difficult to effect so long as the Tyrians kept up their communication with Petra, by way of Rhinocolura. Hence, the unrelenting vigour with which he rooted out the power of the Phœnicians: though it was contrary to his usual policy to destroy a people, who on account of their industry and enterprise would form most valuable subjects. By the destruction of Tyre, which was its outlet to the west, the Indian trade up the Elanitic Gulf was materially injured: by the foundation of Alexandria it was ruined.

The Ptolemies, to whom, after the death of the Macedonian hero, the kingdom of Egypt fell, gave every encouragement to this new route of commerce. They opened out afresh the canal, which Sesostris had constructed, between lake Heroopolis, which communicated with the Nile, and Arsinoe on the Red Sea, thereby rendering the transit of goods as expeditious as possible. For some reason, with which we are not thoroughly acquainted, but most probably from the shallowness of the canal, and want of shelter at Arsinoe, this was not found sufficiently convenient, and another route was adopted. Indian goods instead of being conveyed up the Gulf of Suez, were landed at Berenice, on the Red Sea, thence transported by land for about 150 miles to Coptus, a town on the Nile a few miles below Thebes, whence they reached Alexandria. By another route, they were brought to Myos Hormus at the mouth of the Gulf of Suez, and thence across the desert to Arsinoe. or some other city on the Nile. Lastly, by a third route, they were transported from Arsinoe through the

desert of El Tyh, to a town a little to the north of Memphis, where there has since arisen Grand Cairo. It was by these three routes that Indian commodities were imported into the West, by way of the Red Sea, down to the very time of the Portuguese; it is very nearly in the track of the last one, that our Overland Mail still proceeds.

We have said it was to the patronage and encouragement of the Ptolemies that Egypt in a considerable degree owed her share in the trade with India. She made them a rich and grateful return. Egypt became in wealth and prosperity without an equal. Alexandria rose to the highest pitch of affluence and refinement. Her historians of that time labour with epithets to express her opulence and splendour. The schools of philosophy, and above all her museum and library, in the works of her poets, geometers, and mathematicians, have left lasting evidence of the assiduity, with which literature and science were cultivated by her citizens. The family of the Ptolemies held a lenient—an almost patriarchal—sway over the whole land, and in wealth and resources were for a long time the most powerful monarchs of the day, whilst their court, the "ἄφνειος Πτολεμαίων δόμος," as a Greek calls it, was the resort of learning and the muses. The banks of the Nile were fringed with flourishing cities, and Theocritus, with considerable poetic ingenuity, introduces into his verses the singular and astounding number of 33,333 cities, which annually poured their taxes into the treasury of the Ptolemies, whilst the Phœnicians, Arabians, Syrians, Libyans,

Ethiopians, Cilicians and Carians were their faithful subjects or allies. Coptus, and the neighbouring town of Tentyra, where the caravan route from Berenice met the Nile, rose into an importance which its magnificent ruins still attest. Memphis, the terminus of another route from Arsinoe, the modern Suez, recovered the grandeur which she had lost under the Persian rule, and the whole Delta became a busy scene of commerce, agriculture, and manufactures.

When Egypt at length fell under the rule of the Romans, various circumstances concurred to increase rather than diminish its Oriental commerce. The wealth which her conquests had poured into Rome—the practice of the rich burning their dead on huge funeral-pyres, composed of aromatics and sweet-scented wood from the East, caused a greatly increased demand for Indian commodities; whilst the constant export of corn, lentiles, and other grain, the surplus of her own harvests to the markets of Italy, gave firmness and stability to every branch of her commerce. Alexandria still retained her ancient celebrity for wealth and luxury. Her merchants became, to the very letter, princes. One of them, the wealthy Firmus, the friend and ally, as he proudly called himself, of Odenathus and Zenobia, assumed the imperial purple, and aspired to the empire of the world.

We have, in a previous chapter, noticed the discovery of Hippalus. It brought a vast addition to the goods which passed up the Red Sea. The commerce, which lingered in Petra before the end of the third century

after Christ, had become extinct. Richly-freighted vessels no longer ascended the Elanitic Gulf. All was concentrated at Alexandria, which, if anything, became more prosperous than in the times of the Ptolemies. The works of the ancient fathers are as full of allusions to its opulence and magnitude as are those of the poets of the court of the Lagidæ. One of them styles it πολυανθρωποτάτη πασῶν πόλις, and represents it as one of the most populous and best frequented cities in the world—one whither there was a constant resort, not only of neighbouring nations, but of the most remote and distant countries.

It early became an important station for the dissemination of Christianity. Its patriarch was looked upon as their ecclesiastical superior by the churches of Nubia and Abyssinia.[1] Its missionaries penetrated to India, far beyond even the limits of its commerce, as we gather from the life of Pantænus, and the travels and "Christian Topography" of Cosmas Indicopleustes,[2] an

[1] The bishop of Axum received his appointment from the Alexandrian patriarch.

[2] Cosmas Indicopleustes was an Egyptian merchant, who in the reign of Justinian made several voyages to India, and thence acquired his surname. He afterwards became a monk, and in the leisure of his cell composed several works, one of which, with the title, *Christian Topography*, is still extant. Its principal object is to prove that the earth, instead of being spherical, is an oblong plane 12,000 miles in length, from East to West, and 6,000 miles in breadth from North to South, surrounded by high walls and covered with the firmament as with a canopy: that the phenomenon of day and night was caused by a lofty mountain situated towards the North, round which the sun revolved. "Amidst these wild reveries Cosmas seems to relate what he himself had observed in his travels, or what he had learned

author whose singular geographical and astronomical theories may endanger, but should not overthrow, the credit which is due to his account of what he himself witnessed.

The thriving trade of Alexandria was not to endure for ever. It was long before the barbarians, who, in the seventh and following centuries, overran the Roman Empire, cared for Indian commodities. In the meantime the Mahometan subdued the East, and peaceful relations with Christendom were for several centuries at an end. The trade of Egypt declined. Her commercial emporia gradually lost their importance, and her cities became desolate. About 800 A.D. the Venetians, induced by the prospect of gain, and in defiance of the religious prejudices of the age, entered into friendly relations with her Sultan. By their means trade somewhat revived; the Moorish merchants along the coast of Arabia and at the mouth of the Red Sea entered with ardour into these new plans, and there was, for a short time, a prospect of the re-establishment of the ancient trade and political importance of Egypt. The discoveries, however, of Vasco di Gama put an end to such anticipations. Under the retrograde dominion of the Turks and Mamlukes, her power and commerce has gradually sunk to the lowest ebb.

Although of late the influence of Europeans in the divan of the Pasha, the encouragement given to trade

from others, with great simplicity and regard for truth." *Robertson's India*, p. 108. His work is to be found in Montfauçon's Collection of the Fathers.

by the construction of new or the cleansing of old canals, the projection of railways, and the business brought into the country by our Overland Mail to India, have revived her energies, Egypt possesses but few remains of her ancient opulence and ancient splendour, and seems doomed to be, what for so many ages she has been, the skeleton of her former grandeur—the land of sordid huts and magnificent ruins.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COMMERCE OF THE TYRIANS WITH INDIA.

"Prima ratem ventis credere docta Tyros."—*Tibullus.*

THE rise, the progress, and the fall of great despotic empires, especially those of Asia, are in general as destitute of interest as of instruction. The results of their conquests, the character of their institutions, and the crimes of their tyrants, to the friend of liberty and constitutional government, furnish but a single lesson. They simply exhibit objects to be avoided. Not so, however, the history of those free and enterprising nations which have exerted a marked influence on the spread of civilization. Such were the Phœnicians. Yet wide and well known as was the extent and effects of their commerce in ancient times, the information concerning it to be found in Greek and Roman writers is scanty and unsatisfactory in the extreme. The fact, that to this people are to be referred the invention of alphabetic writing and of numbers, renders the loss of their records the more to be regretted. It is a gap in the history of the human race, which the advance of civilization will continually render more sensible, when the description of peaceful progress shall become as much the business of the historian as the narratives of war and bloodshed. Consider how little mercantile

affairs have arrested the attention of the annalists of states professedly commercial, and though we may still regret, we shall not be surprised at the paucity of our information concerning Tyre.

Of her native historians—of those annalists whose precious chronicles were preserved with religious assiduity in the great temple of Melcarth or Hercules, and which furnished Dios and Menander with the materials for their respective works—there remains, alas! nothing.[1] In a treatise of Philo, an Alexandrian Platonizing Jew, are found Greek translations of a few fragments of Sanchoniathon on Cosmogony and Theogony. This is all that has survived of the writings of a nation, the inventors of literature.

It has been maintained[2] that the Geography of Ptolemy was composed from an ancient Phœnician atlas, and thus defines the extent of their commerce. The grounds of this supposition are, however, both slender and exceptionable. We are, in consequence, thrown back upon Greek and Roman authors who have treated of Tyre, and who all, with the exception of Herodotus, lived long after its destruction by Alexander. As a considerable portion of its trade had then passed into another channel, it cannot be a matter of surprise that none of them have entered into its details.

The prosperity and opulence of the Tyrians, however, must have attracted considerable attention, when

[1] On the historical authority of these documents, see Heeren's Asiatic Nations, vol. i., 290.

[2] By Brehmer, a German, see Heeren's Asiatic R., vol. i., 290.

not only were they the great carriers of the Mediterranean, but when in their vessels alone the merchandise of India, which had been brought up the Elanitic Gulf by the Sabæans and Hamyarites to the great marts at Selah, or Petra, and Rhinocolura, in addition to that which had been transported by way of the Persian Gulf, through Babylon, Mesopotamia, and the Syrian desert, was distributed over the regions of the West. We have, however, one author who saw and has described their splendour when they conducted this commerce. This was the prophet Ezekiel. As everything which has reference to the earliest and greatest commercial state of antiquity is possessed of peculiar interest, we shall dwell at some length on the scanty memorials of her intercourse with India.

From Ezekiel's denunciations upon Tyre for rejoicing in the destruction of Jerusalem, because the trade, which she had enjoyed from Tadmor and Selah would now entirely flow through her own ports,[1] we gain a fair idea of the countries with which she held communication.[2] From the fir forests of the mountain range of Senir or Hermon, and from the sides of Lebanon she obtained cedar and similar kinds of timber, easy to be wrought, and, on account of their peculiar odour, unaffected by destructive insects. From the oak woods of Bashan came stout poles for oars and spars. The looms of Egypt furnished sails

[1] Ez. xxvi. 3.

[2] Ez. chap. xxvii. I have chiefly followed the authorized version. The translation of this chap. by Michaelis is much more vividly descriptive of the Oriental trade of Tyre.

and tackling; those of Elisha, or Asia Minor, cloths for garments.

From Zidon, and her colonies of Arvad or Aradus, which, in the time of the Seleucidæ, became as powerful and as populous as Tyre herself, she acquired her most experienced seamen. She hired her soldiers from Arvad and Persia, but especially from Lud and Phut, which were regions on the northern shores of Africa. With these, by means of her colony Carthage, she was closely connected in the very earliest times. From Tarshish, which was probably the western part of the Mediterranean, she received all kinds of precious metals, silver, iron, tin, and lead.

From the isles of Greece, and Meshech and Tubal on the shores of the Euxine, she imported brazen vessels and the persons of men—the well-formed Caucasians and the comely daughters of Circassia. From Togarmah, either Armenia or the ancient Cappadocia, she was supplied with horses and mules. It may not be amiss to remark that from the same region, according to some authors, sprang the celebrated horses of Arabia. Possibly it was a Tyrian speculation which transported them so far from their home. Thence too came those far-famed snow-white steeds of Nyssa which drew the chariot of the Persian monarch, and eight of which, gorgeously caparisoned, were yoked to that of Mithra or the Sun. With the Greeks, the breed that bore the genuine brand of Koppa or Cappadocian were held of countless price.

Again, from Dedan on the Persian Gulf she obtained

the ebony and ivory of India, The manufactures and fabrics of Syria, and especially of Damascus, its capital, filled her markets and supplied her with precious stones, coral, and jewels. Thence too came fine wool and the wine of Helbon ;[1] large quantities of which she exported to Egypt, and exchanged for every description of linen manufacture. The magnitude of this branch of her commerce may be conjectured from the assertion of Herodotus,[2] that one quarter of imperial Memphis was inhabited solely by Phœnician merchants. Palestine furnished her with agricultural produce: "wheat of Pannag and Minnith, and honey and oil, and balm." Dan, or according to Michaelis, Wadan, on the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, in Arabia Felix, and Javan, brought her bright iron for sword-blades, cassia and cinnamon. The country of Edom sent its flocks and herds. Dedan, the southern parts of Arabia, Sheba, Raamah, Canneh, and Eden, indisputably Aden, all celebrated ports on the Indian Ocean, furnished her with the chief of spices, with all precious stones and gold. Thence too came the merchants who imported her Indian commodities, "with all sorts of things in blue cloths, and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, *bound with cords and made of cedar*,[3] among her merchandise." We

[1] Probably Chalybon, Haleb, and the modern Aleppo.

[2] Lib. ii., 112. In times antecedent to this, she carried on a land trade with Upper Egypt, whose great emporium was Thebes. The great extent and importance of this trade is investigated in Heeren's African Researches.

[3] The boxes in which sago and similar articles come through Singapore from regions not much frequented by Europeans, answer precisely to this description.

hesitate not to say, remarks a writer on Oriental commerce, that no one who has seen the method in which Indian goods are packed by the natives can doubt but such commodities are here described by the prophet.

Such is the exalted idea given by Ezekiel of the extensive commerce which the Tyrians carried on in those early times. An account, we may observe, which in every respect confirms the scattered notices of Strabo and others, of the fact that the first route of Indian commerce was by the Eastern arm of the Red Sea.

Whether the Phœnicians were Anakims, and their appellation Φοίνικες be but a corruption of the Hebrew Beni-Anak, sons of Anak,[1] may, in the lack of positive evidence, be reasonably questioned. There can be little doubt, however, that they were of Canaanitish descent. The existing fragments of their language, and that of their colonists, the Carthaginians,[2] fully support this hypothesis. Like the Chaldæans, the Syrians, and the Idumæans, they spoke a dialect of the Hebrew, and in consequence were enabled readily to associate with the neighbouring nations. To this circumstance is to be attributed their appearance as merchants in the Persian Gulf.

When the consolidation of the major part of those nations which used the Hebrew, or its dialects, took place under the dominion of David and his successors,

[1] See Prof. Eadie's Oriental Hist., p. 426, for different derivations of Phœnicians.

[2] *e. g.* The well-known Carthaginian words in the Pœnulus of Plautus.

their merchants and colonies were to be found as frequent on the shores and islands of the Indian Ocean[1] as of the Mediterranean. Manning the fleets of Solomon at Elath and Ezion Gaber, at the northern extremity of the Elanitic Gulf, they sailed to Ophir[2] —that distant and indefinite region—and returned *in the third year* replete with wealth. The commodities which they imported, ivory, ebony, precious stones, gold, apes, peacocks, all the productions of Southern Arabia, Æthiopia, and India, point to the East as the direction of their voyage. An inspection of maps exhibiting the direction of the monsoons will show that the prevailing winds in the Red Sea are such, that if they left Elath in the October of one year they would be unable to return with the south wind before the spring of the third year from their departure. This explanation may possibly account for the lengthened duration of their voyage.

It was not, however, entirely to the fostering influence of the Jewish monarch that their Indian commerce maintained it existence. When the Edomites revolted, and the Jews were expelled from their ports, no diminution is observed in the splendour of Tyre. Her Oriental traffic, though by no means to be compared with that which she carried on with every coast of the Mediterranean, was of no inconsiderable impor-

[1] Their settlements were in general, like the mother-state, established upon islands near extensive continents, *e. g.* Gades, Antaradus, Tylos in the Indian Ocean, &c.

[2] Probably used with considerably latitude, like our East and West Indies. 2 Chr. ix. 21.

tance. That branch of it which flowed through Judæa bore but a small proportion to the whole.

Babylon, when in the height of its grandeur, was as celebrated for its commerce and manufactures as for its conquests. From Gerrha, one of its colonies at the summit of the Persian Gulf, and probably from India itself, it imported in the most remote ages cotton and flax, to be woven in the looms of Opis and Borsippa,[1] and other cities of the fertile Mesopotamia. From Candahar and Cashmeer was obtained the longest and the softest wool, and possibly China furnished the golden cocoon. With these and the dyes of India were wrought those far-famed Babylonian garments, which were the admiration of antiquity, and one of which roused the ungodly cupidity of the wretched Achan. In addition to these, numerous were the articles of luxury either manufactured in Babylon or imported from the distant East.[2] All these found their way into the West by the agency of the Tyrians, who, besides their settlements on the Red Sea, were also directly connected with the Persian Gulf, that "highway which nature has prepared for the admission of sea-faring nations into the interior of Asia." Tylos and Aradus, islands opposite to Gerrha, were either Tyrian colonies, or (what some have not

[1] These manufactures existed in the time of Strabo (16 § p. 1,074), see Heeren on the Babylonians.

[2] *E. g.*, every kind of apparel, sweet waters, canes, walking sticks, carved wood, ivory, &c., signet-stones, of which so many have been recently exhumed at Khorsabad, &c., and under the name of Babylonian cylinders are to be seen in every museum, Indian dogs (the *Tibetian dog* of Buffon) dyes, precious stones, especially jaspers and emeralds from the desert of Cobi, &c. &c. See Heeren.

hesitated to assert) the parent state from which the Tyrians themselves sprang.[1] Their connection with the Hamyarites and Yemen, by way of the Red Sea, has been already mentioned. Ezekiel and other sacred writers represent them as trading to Dedan, which is to be found in the same region. Modern travellers remark that along the whole coast of the Persian Gulf are even still to be found cities and districts whose names indicate a Phœnician origin.[2] So that long before the Persian empire had risen into importance, when Babylon was still in the heyday of its prosperity, Phœnician merchants managed the trade of the Persian Gulf, and, in conjunction with the Hamyarites, the coasting trade of a considerable portion of Southern Asia.

Nor was this all. Gerrha, whose opulence has been described by Strabo and Agatharchides, was the focus to which converged the caravan routes of Western Arabia,[3] as those of Syria did to Tadmor. Of these,

[1] Strabo and Pliny, vi. 28, are the authorities for this; yet both are indebted to more ancient authors. See Heeren's A. R., vol. i. 434. "On sailing south from Gerrha," says Strabo, "we come to two islands where there are to be seen Phœnician temples, and the inhabitants assure us that the cities of Phœnicia bearing the same name are colonies from them." These islands are probably the Bahrein Islands (see map) one of which, according to Niebuhr, is still called Arad. Herodotus refers twice (lib. i. 1. and vii. 89) to the Phœnicians having originally come from the Red Sea.

From the Bahrein Islands, which are still celebrated for this commodity, they obtained the choicest pearls. Hence came ivory, ebony, frankincense, spices, and cinnamon; "the incense of Sheba and the sweet cane from a far country," as they are styled by Jeremiah (vi. 20).

[2] Dr. Seetzen. See App. vii to Heeren's A. R.

[3] For account of the ancient caravan routes of the whole of Asia see Heeren's A. R. App. 13.

the principal was that which led to Mariaba or Saba, the capital of Yemen. In this way, even when excluded by political circumstances or otherwise from the great mart of Petra, Tyrians could still acquire by another channel the valuable and savoury produce of Arabia Felix, which, as indispensable for the proper performance of their religious rites among the nations of Europe, always commanded a ready market.

In addition to her communication with the East by the route above mentioned, Tyre was connected with Bactria and the interior of Asia by that great caravan route, or, as Arrian styles it, λεωφόρος ὁδὸς, which traversed the whole extent of what was afterwards the Persian empire.[1] Passing through Babylon, it turned to the north to avoid the predatory tribes which infested the desert between Media and Persia, and through populous and cultivated regions reached Ecbatana. It thence crossed the mountains into Hyrcania, through the most celebrated defiles of Aria, "the Caspian Gates." At Aria it was divided into several branches: one penetrated northwards to Maracanda, into the furthest recesses of Tartary; another southwards to the cities of the Punjaub; whilst the terminus of the main branch was the city of Bactra. It may be remarked that it was by this road, which is well laid down by Strabo from Eratosthenes and Arrian, that Alexander invaded India.

[1] Another great road is minutely described by Herodotus. (v. 52) It led from Sardis to Susa, and was afterwards embellished by magnificent caravanserais at the expense of the Persian monarchs. By this means, as well as in Tyrian vessels, Eastern commodities reached

Such is a brief outline of the commodities and the routes by which they were poured—from Gerrha on the Persian Gulf—from Ezion Gaber on the Elanitic Gulf—from Babylon and Mesopotamia through Palmyra and Baalbec—from Bactra through the Caspian Gates—from the whole of Eastern Asia into the ports of Phœnicia. It may be safely asserted that in very remote times the countries to the north of Hindostan, the coasts of Ceylon, and the interior of Arabia, were as well or even better known to the Tyrians than they were to our own merchants in the 18th century. How extensive must have been the commerce which can warrant such a remark!

The means by which the Phœnicians dispersed their wares in the West, is traced without much difficulty. Besides Sidon, from which Tyre herself sprung, and which in the time of Joshua was so large as to be called Sidon the "great," whilst Tyre is mentioned as the "fortified" or "strong" city, she possessed in her own narrow strip of country, Aradus, Orthosia, Tripolis, Byblus, Berytus, and Sarepta, cities of considerable importance. These were all busy hives of industry, and were actively employed in manufacturing, sorting, and again exporting, her various commodities.

Her colonies, too, were to be found in every part of the Mediterranean. Unlike those of the Greeks, which were formed by men driven from their own country by

the shores of Asia Minor. The almost fabulous wealth of Gyges, Midas, Crœsus, and the Lydian monarchs, and the well-known prosperity of the cities of Asia Minor, may have been in some degree due to their proximity to this route.

want, by sedition, or for their crimes, those of the Tyrians were founded for the purposes of commerce *alone*, and a constant trade passed between them and the mother-state. Those of Uttica and Carthage are well known as important cities and marts of merchandise. "Ambæ inclytæ, ambæ a Phœnicibus conditæ, illa fato Catonis insignis, hæc suo," says Mela. Their citizens were the great merchants of the western coasts of the Mediterranean, as the Tyrians were of the Eastern.

We have, however, accounts of colonies of the Tyrians, even older than these. Gadiz or Cades, the present Cadiz, is said to have been founded even before Carthage, though its future importance was derived from its trade with that and the mother-state. Curious to relate, one author attributes its foundation not directly to Tyre, but to merchants who sailed from Ezion Gaber[1] (with which we have shown that the Syrians had the most important mercantile relations), and circumnavigated Africa. Nearer home, Cyprus, Rhodes,[2] Thasos, Crete, the Sporades and Cyclades, and many other islands and ports of the Ægean, celebrated in classic story for their wealth and population, are mentioned as her tributaries. Pronectus and Bithynium on the Propontis, like Constantinople in modern times, gave her the command of the Euxine, and enabled her to carry on a profitable commerce with the numerous

[1] Bozius de Ruinis Gentium, p. 304.

[2] In the island of Rhodes, Jalysus, Camirus, and Lindus, were built by the Phœnicians. Rhodes was built later.

The discovery of gold caused them to colonize Thasos. Herodotus (ii. 44, &c.) saw the remains of their shafts and galleries.

races which inhabit its shores and the valleys of the Caucasus.

Many too were the states in Greece and Asia Minor which pointed to a Phœnician origin. There is not lacking evidence to show that the Lydians, who were for some time the richest and most civilized people in Asia, were probably an offshoot from this enterprising race. It is not impossible that from these came the Tyrrhenians[1] and the Tuscans of Italy. Sardinia, and the islands off the coast of Italy, were full of their settlements,[2] and Thucydides[3] says that they possessed all the shores and promontories of Sicily, and inscriptions[4] are said to have been found at the ancient Panormus, which, singular as it may seem, connect its foundation with their *Oriental* trade.

[1] All this Tyrrhenian, Lydian, and Etruscan affinity, is, however, enveloped in considerable doubt. On this subject, see Dionysius, i. 28. Livy says, that the Tuscans were Rhœtians. To this opinion, Müller and Niebuhr more or less incline.

[2] Singular to relate, into Italy itself they never penetrated. Heeren, Asiatic R., ii. 313.

[3] Thucyd. vi. 2.

[4] Fazelus says that at Panormus in Sicily were found two very old inscriptions. One of them was to the following effect:—"When Isaac, the son of Abraham, was living and reigning in Idumea, and Esau the son of Isaac in the valley of Damascus, a great company of Hebrews, to which were joined many Damascenes and Phœnicians, arrived at this triangular island and fixed their abode in this pleasant place, which they called Panormus."

The other was:—"There is no other God but one: there is none mighty as He. There is no Conqueror like God whom we worship. Saphu, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, the brother of Jacob, the son of Abraham, was set over this tower. The name of the tower is Baich, and the name of the next tower, Pharath."

This is strange, if true! Bozius, de Ruinis Gentium et Regnorum, lib. iii. cap. 12., p. 303, quotes it as authentic.

Such were the Phœnicians, in the most remote times to which history or tradition attain. The long siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar—its destruction by Alexander —the spread of the Hellenic race, and the increasing enterprise of their colonists in Asia Minor—the withdrawal of the India trade from the Elanitic to the Heroopolitic Gulf, and the establishment of Alexandria, instead of Petra or Rhinocolura, for the entrepôt between the East and West—effectually ruined the trade of Tyre. The Romans destroyed Carthage, her most flourishing colony, and got possession of her settlements in Spain and Italy. Under their rule, commerce flourished but languidly. The mother city found but little favour with the people who had so ruthlessly destroyed her principal colony. Under the dominion of Rome, she appears to have fallen into a second-rate port of the Mediterranean, and to have lost all her former enterprise and activity.

When, however, that empire fell, and the Mahometans had planted the crescent throughout the East, Tyre acquired fresh maritime power. The Greeks, in whose hands had been the commerce of the eastern part of the Mediterranean, no longer traded to Egypt and Syria. Tyre, and the cities along the coast of Palestine, became the entrepôts between the Mahometans of Africa and those of Asia, and rose into the consideration which they possessed at the time of the Crusades; when Europeans began again to join in commerce with the East, and a fresh taste for Oriental productions arose in the West. We are told that when the Crusaders arrived

before Tyre, they found a circuit of no less than nineteen miles of walls, bristling with Saracen troops; such was the strength of Tyre at that epoch.

The jealousy, however, of the Italian republics, who allowed of no rival, soon destroyed her commerce. From a magnificent town, the mart of the merchandise of the East, and the seat of an important bishopric, she became a dreary fortress, she sank into a paltry village, the resort of pirates and bandits, "*statio malefida carinis.*" She is now, to the very letter of the denunciation which was pronounced against her, a barren rock, "a place to spread nets upon."

In reviewing their commerce, it is a matter of surprise that the political power of the Phœnicians occupies no very conspicuous position on the page of history. We generally find them an independent state. They are first mentioned as the allies of Solomon, then as waging war for their existence with the Babylonian empire when at the summit of its power. In the wide unconsolidated kingdom of Persia they occupied the position rather of allies than of subjects. They willingly[1] lent their aid to humble Greece, subdue her Asiatic colonies, and reduce distant regions, because such conquests redounded no less to their own profit than to the glory of the great king. Thus, in the middle ages, did the fleets of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa transport the Paladins to Syria and the East. The

[1] With this, contrast their refusal to obey Cambyses, when he bade them make war upon the Carthaginians, with whom they were connected by the closest of all ties, consanguinity and commerce. Her. iii., 19.

fourth crusade began with an attack upon Zara, the revolted subject of Venice, and, at its conclusion, left the city of the lagunes the richest and most powerful state of the Mediterranean. So feeble was the rule exercised over Tyre by Persia, that when that empire fell before Alexander they were the only state that refused to acknowledge his suprémacy. They resisted to the last a dominion which admitted their competitors, the Greeks, into all their emporia, and threatened utter ruin to their commerce.

Their great colonies, too, in Africa rose into considerable importance, and waged a long and cruel war which resulted in their ruin. They had established a rule over the fierce barbarians of the Spanish peninsula, but so weak as to succumb after a short though a gallant resistance to the prowess of the Scipios.

Phœnicia was a narrow strip of country, defended on the east by rugged mountains and on the west bordering on the sea. Nearly dependent for its subsistence on the neighbouring countries, and deriving all its importance from the commerce of its seaports, its power was never sufficiently condensed so as to exercise any great or direct influence on the destinies of the neighbouring states.

The effects of its commerce upon the general civilization of the ancient world is more remarkable. The Tyrian pennant waved at the same time over Britain and Ceylon, and whatever arts, learning, or cultivation was engendered in the broad regions which lay between was rendered common to mankind by their voyages and

commercial relations. The literature of Greece—the verses of Homer—the investigations of Herodotus and Thucydides—the eloquence of Demosthenes and the learning of Plato and Aristotle might have perished unknown and unregarded, if Phœnician merchantmen had never anchored in the creeks of the Peloponnese.

They were the first also to give full scope to that hardy and adventurous spirit, the parent of nautical science. There can be little doubt that their seamen in the reign of Pharaoh Necho accomplished the circumnavigation of Africa,[1] and they were well acquainted with the shores of Britain and Gaul.[2] They were the first to unite distant regions by the bands of mutual interest, and relieve the wants of the West with the superfluities of the East.

Though never possessing a compact power which might affect the policy of the age, they maintained for many centuries a regular and well organized government. Their little country was never, like Portugal in after times, utterly exhausted by the drain upon its resources and population for its foreign commerce or colonies. The cause of this is to be found—first, in its power of drafting into its population individuals from the neighbouring nations, who all used the same, or a kindred language. Secondly, in the fact of the cities of Phœnicia being, not simply commercial, but likewise manufacturing communities.

[1] The account of this voyage given by Herodotus (lib. iv., 42) is fully investigated by Dr. Robertson and by Heeren, A. R., vol. i. 337, and both arrive at the conclusion that there is the strongest possible evidence of its having really been performed.

[2] As may be seen from the account of the Periplus of Hanno.

The distant deserts of Arabia, the rich pastures of Idumæa, and the famed flocks of Syria and Zobah, furnished them with the choicest fleeces; India sent her indigo and cochineal; whilst the sea, which broke along her rocky shore, nurtured a species of oyster, which produced the most precious of colours. Art and labour fashioned these raw materials into the most valuable vests and hangings.

In her workshops, too, were fabricated every description of household utensil, especially those formed of bronze, tin, copper, and the less common metals. The invention of glass is attributed to her people; a clear quartzose sand, and seaweed, from which could be extracted potash and other ingredients, well adapted for its composition, was collected along her coasts. Like Venice, to which in many other respects she bore a strong resemblance, she was long celebrated for all kinds of vitreous ware. Every species of personal ornament, employed either in war or peace, jewellery, cut stones, toys, and gew-gaws of every description—in fact, all that would at present be included under the denomination of fancy goods—were constructed by her artizans. "Sidonia arts" grew into a proverb of frequent application. Hence sprang up capital for her country; hence came the commodities which she bartered with such profit against the productions of remote regions. Hence arose her opulence, hence that prosperity of her people which for so many ages rendered her independent, and preserved her from revolution and disorder.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATIVE COMMERCE OF THE HINDOOS IN ANCIENT TIMES.

Our attention has hitherto been directed to the nature of those branches of European or Asiatic commerce which were connected with that of the distant East. The reader may have remarked that this traffic has been conducted almost entirely by the agency of European or Tyrian merchants, and may have erroneously concluded that the mercantile activity of the West found no counterpart in the East. Of the trade of the Eastern coast of Asia—of that of China and Japan, and of the internal trade of the Sinæ and Seres in ancient times, we know absolutely nothing, and there is little reason to expect that further research into the annals of China, or investigations which may soon be undertaken by the Americans into those of Japan, will throw any light upon this subject. There exist, however, several notices of the course of trade which was developed in the peninsula of India itself. Although these may not all refer to precisely the same period, yet, as has been so frequently observed, changes in the commercial routes of Asia, before the

discovery of the Cape, occurred so rarely, that a description applicable to one period might safely be referred to several centuries preceding, as well as succeeding.

Our principal source of information is a work entitled "The Circumnavigation of the Red or Indian Sea," and is usually ascribed to Arrian It relates the voyage of a merchant from Egypt to the western coast of India, which was performed some time within the first two centuries of the Christian era. He represents the internal commerce of the peninsula as unexpectedly thriving; and that confidence may be attached to his narrative has been proved, by the discovery of the remains of important cities in the positions which he has described as emporia. This testimony is further corroborated by Hindoo writings, and the character and civilization of the various races inhabiting the peninsula.

In the first place, it may be remarked, that in the Code of Menu, although numerous articles of luxury are mentioned, yet all appear to have been of native production. Their abundance, however, proves that an active commerce was anciently conducted between the different countries of India. That foreign commodities were scarce, the frequent complaint of European writers, that the East was constantly absorbing the wealth of the West, would lead us to suspect. The productions of India were invariably procured, not by an interchange of those peculiar to the West against those of the East, but almost entirely

by the intervention of the precious metals. Pliny calculates that in this way no less than 500,000,000 sesterces, or about three millions of our money, was annually drained from the Roman Empire,[1] and in modern times remonstrances on this same subject have on several occasions been presented to Parliament against the British East India Company.

That the native commerce, too, was not simply confined to that by land, may also be gathered from Menu,[2] who in one chapter treats of the interest of money lent on risk, which was to be determined by "*men well acquainted with sea voyages and journeys by land*"; and, in another passage, enumerates among the fourth class, or Sudras, "the shipbuilders and sailors, as many as navigate rivers." The further importance which, in this celebrated Code, is attached to commerce, may be conjectured from the fact, that the third class of Hindoos is absolutely set apart for its pursuit. That it was not simply petty trade, but an extensive intercourse between distant regions which is contemplated, is proved by the nature of the duties which are enjoined. Their principal occupation is defined to be "the keeping of herds of cattle (with which in India commodities are transported from place to place), to carry on trade, to lend on interest, and cultivate the soil. Hence they are to turn their attention to practical

[1] Pliny Nat. Hist. vi. 23. "Nullo anno imperii nostri minus HS quingenties exhauriente India et merces remittente quæ apud nos centuplicato veneant." Some give a less value to HS quingenties."

[2] On this subject, see Elphinstone's India, p. 166, and Sir W. Jones' translation of the Code of Menu.

knowledge. They must be thoroughly acquainted with all commodities and soils, with the productions and wants of other countries, with various dialects and languages, and with whatever else has direct or indirect reference to purchase and sale. In one word, they are to be perfect men of business."[1]

Again the progress of inland commerce was materially facilitated by the convenience of transport afforded by the numerous rivers which everywhere intersect the continent of India, and especially by the Ganges and its tributaries. The Indus and the rivers on the western coast, as is still the case, were, with the exception perhaps of the Nerbudda, but little used for the purposes of trade. In the earliest times, as well as under the Mogul empire, the great roads engaged the peculiar attention of the Government, and carts appear to have been more extensively used than in the present day. Thus the author of the Periplus informs us that commodities from the commercial depôts of the interior were conveyed on carriages to the sea-coast. It may be further remarked, that the rapidity with which Alexander penetrated into the Punjaub is only to be accounted for on the supposition of his army following some well-appointed highway.

The early possession of a gold and silver coinage,[2] and the conveniences of a system of banking, which was

[1] See Irving's Theory and Practice of Caste, p. 11.

[2] The coinage of money with the date and name of some prince, &c. inscribed thereon, was introduced into India by the Mahometans; for many ages before their time, however, pieces stamped with some emblematic device, and called *kaltries*, had been current. See Heeren, A. R., ii., 270. They are mentioned in the Periplus.

practised in India for many a long age before the Bardi and Medici of Florence had introduced its blessings into Europe, were other circumstances which not only facilitated, but also attest the existence of inland commerce; whilst the performance of pilgrimages and the celebration of religious festivals, common to many distant races, furnished extensive markets in which the most various commodities gained a ready sale.[1]

Lastly, the refinement to which the Hindoos so early arrived indicates the same fact. The civilization of a people has generally been directly proportional to its intercourse with foreign countries. Mutual interest and mutual wants render such intercourse desirable. The maxims and laws necessary for its maintenance—the ingenuity requisite for its management, and for supplying the commodities for which there is a demand—the

[1] The following description of the fair of Hurdwar, by Captain Hurdwicke, Asiatic Researches, vol. vi., p. 312, will serve to illustrate this remark:—"This fair is an annual assemblage of Hindoos to bathe, for a certain number of days, in the waters of the Ganges at this consecrated spot. The multitude collected on this occasion might, I think, with moderation be computed at two a half million of souls. Although the performance of a religious duty is their primary object, yet many avail themselves of the opportunity to transact business, and carry on an extensive annual commerce. In this concourse of nations, it is a matter of no small amusement to a curious observer, to trace the dress, features, manners, &c., which characterize the people of the different countries of Cabul, Cashmir, Lahore, Bootan, Sirinagur, Cummow, and the plains of Hindostan. From some of these very distant countries, whole families, men, women, and children, undertake the journey; some travelling on foot, some on horseback, and many, particularly women, and children, in long, heavy carts, railed, and covered with sloping matted roofs, to defend them against the sun and wet weather; and during the continuance of the fair, these also serve as habitations."

enterprise called forth by traversing distant regions, and the conveyance of commodities by sea or land, are some of the first steps in civilization. Literature and the fine arts follow in the wake, and produce their peculiar effects; but the earlier, if not the very first, elements must always be due to commerce, which affords men opportunities of disposing of their superfluities, suggests new desires and new methods of enjoyment, in consequence introduces emulation and improvement, and renders the discoveries and inventions of one nation or individual common to the whole race of mankind[1].

With these remarks upon what, from the nature of the case, and from the testimony of Hindoos, must have been the condition of the early commerce of India, we proceed to examine its particular routes as described by classical authors, and especially by Arrian, or whoever else was the author of the Periplus. If Hindoo writers of the same age had occupied themselves more in tracing the mercantile relations of their countrymen, than in narrating the adventures of Bali (the Hercules of Hindoo mythology), and the invasion of Ceylon by Rama and his army of apes, we should be able to trace more definitely the course of their traffic, and we should doubtless discover that as in the West, so in the East, civilization, prosperity, constitutional government, and

[1] Whately, Lessons on Religious Worship, p. 23, shows that men have not and cannot of themselves emerge from barbarism; that civilization, in fact, is due primarily to Divine Revelation. This, though open to some exception, may be true. All *progress*, however, *in civilization*, must indisputably be attributed to mutual intercourse, *i. e.* to commerce.

individual liberty, as far as is compatible with the Asiatic character, have ever been the handmaids of commerce.

We will consider the native trade of India under the three separate branches into which it was divided.

First. That of the *Indus* and the *Malabar Coast.*

Secondly. That of *Ceylon.*

Thirdly. That of the *Ganges* and the *Coromandel Coast.*

I. The great maritime emporia for the trade of the west coast of the Peninsula were Pattala, Barygaza, and Musiris. The first of these, which Arrian[1] places at the apex of the delta of the Indus, most probably occupied the position of the modern Hyderabad, and was the great outlet for the productions of the Punjaub.[2] Agatharchides expressly informs us that there was an active trade carried on between this port and the cities of Yemen. As we have previously observed, the trade on the Indus and its tributaries appears as well in ancient as in modern times to have always been languid and unimportant. Some communication, however, must have existed with the considerable cities which have in all ages been sprinkled along the fertile banks of the *five rivers,* which give its name to the Punjaub. Taxila, the modern Attock, on the Indus, at the terminus of an

[1] De Exped. Alexandri, vi. 17. Until Pottinger, who accompanied Ellis in his mission to the Ilmeers, described (Travels, p. 342) the Delta of the Indus, Pattala was usually identified with Tatta, to which its name bears so great a resemblance. An inspection of the map will show that either Tatta or Hyderabad may be said to be situated at the apex of the Delta.

[2] Geogr. Min. i., p. 66.

important caravan route from Palibothra or Allahabad on the Ganges, or, to speak more properly, at the point where the caravans from Cabul and the West to the cities of the Ganges crossed the Indus, was very early a mart for merchandise. It is not unnatural to suppose that goods were occasionally floated down the stream to Hyderabad, and thence conveyed to the Persian Gulf or Red Sea, since we are informed that commodities destined for the same regions were brought in great quantities and by land from the same place, Taxila, to the more important emporium of Barygaza, at the mouth of the Nerbudda.

This city has been identified with Baroach, which in modern times has lost much of its consequence by reason of its proximity to Surat and Bombay. Anciently, however, it was the centre of an active commerce with the West. Besides the commodities floated down the Nerbudda, and its intercourse with the distant North[1] through Taxila to Bactra (or Bokhara), whence it obtained silk from Thina, probably some part of China, and gold from the desert of Cobi; its traffic with three considerable towns in the interior is noted in the Periplus. These were Ozene, Tagara, and Pluthana.

Ozene, near the modern Oojein, in Malwa, which was the capital of Scindiah's kingdom, is still one of the most important of the Mahratta cities, and is described by Arrian as formerly a "royal residence," was the

[1] The direction of this route is nowhere given. Probably, it fell into the grand route from the Indus to the Ganges at Delhi, or some one of the great cities along its course.

market for internal traffic. It especially supplied the neighbouring regions with necessaries, and transmitted to Barygaza for exportation, onyx-stones, muslins, and coarse and fine calicoes. The ancient city is reported[1] to have been overwhelmed by an earthquake, and at a depth of several yards are still found the remains of what was evidently in bygone days an opulent city. Subterranean palaces containing courts, galleries, and apartments supported by numerous pillars, and adorned with figures of men, curiously carved in high relief, bear testimony to the prosperity of a Hindoo commercial emporium. The modern Oojein, and, according to the Ayin Akberi,[2] the surrounding country for the space of two *coss* in circumference, is reckoned sacred, and is still the resort of pilgrims. This, united to the circumstance of its being a royal residence, will probably account for Oojein, which is neither situated on an important stream, nor possesses any natural advantages which would render it a mart for merchandise, having become one of the grand staples for the commerce of the interior.

The position of Tagara and Pluthana cannot be so clearly defined,[3] although they are described as being the largest marts in the Deccan. The former may

[1] Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. 36.

[2] ii. 547.

[3] The position of Tagara and Pluthana are defined differently by almost every writer on the subject. The similarity of the name, the vicinity to the temples of Ellora, so similar to those at Elephanta, near Galliane (a town which we know to have been engaged in the same commerce), render it probable that Deogiri and Tagara are identical. See Elph. India, p. 223.

possibly correspond with Deogiri, *i. e.*, the hill of the gods, a place celebrated for its numerous pagodas, its proximity to the renowned rock-temples of Ellore, and for the design which Mahomet Toghlak conceived of rendering it, in the place of Delhi, the capital of the Mahometan empire in India. Pluthana, which was the market for onyx-stones, and whence "bad roads" led to Barygaza, is to be sought for somewhere in the Western Ghauts or the Concan.

In addition to these principal marts, others connected with the same branch of trade are noted. Among these occur the names of Parti, Mangaruth, Salopatana, Malopatana, and Pudapatana[1] on the coast of Malabar. Further north, the mention of Sibor, Orrhota (the modern Surat), and Calliene, *i. e.*, Galliane, near Bombay, show that in the island of Salsette, and the neighbouring districts, there was found in the earliest ages the same appearance of commercial activity which they have always presented in modern times.

The management of the maritime trade connected with Barygaza appears to have been chiefly in the hands of the Banians[2] and Arabs, who possessed establishments along the whole southern coast of Arabia and Persia, and more especially at Musa, the present Mocha, which the Periplus informs us was wholly inhabited by Arab shipowners and sailors, who traded to the opposite port of Barygaza. The Greeks no

[1] Mentioned by Cosmas Indicopleustes.

[2] The Banians are Vaisya; their name is said properly to mean, corn-merchant. See Ayin Akberi, ii., p. 399.

doubt visited this entrepôt as well as that of Pattala, but the port which they frequented in considerable numbers was Musiris in Limyrica, on the Malabar coast, a port which is variously identified with Mangalore or Meerjee.[1] We are not informed whether this emporium was, like Barygaza, the focus of numerous mercantile routes from the interior, nor, as far as we know, has it been celebrated either in ancient or modern times as a religious resort for pilgrims or devotees, who have in the East at all times materially influenced the fortunes of commerce. It is more probable that then, as now, the shores of Malabar swarmed with native craft, small coasters, which collected from every port of the peninsula, and from those of Ceylon, spices and Oriental productions more precious than what was obtainable at the ports of the Indus and Nerbudda.

Large quantities of silk, again, are mentioned as the exports of Musiris, and the Periplus informs us that this was obtained from Thina, not, as in the case of Barygaza, by caravans from Taxila, but by merchants who brought it down the stream to the mouth of the Ganges. As we hear of no route by which it was thence conveyed to Limyrica, and as the distance, as well as the inaccessible character of the country, by reason of the Ghauts and jungle, would render inland communication impossible, there can be little doubt but that its transport was effected by country craft, similar to those which now ply along the same coasts. Musiris, too, was the port first frequented by those who sailed to

[1] Rennel says, Meerjee : Heeren, Mangalore.

India by the monsoons, and the chain of commercial relations which arose thereupon between this and the neighbouring emporia rendered it for many ages a convenient staple for the trade of Southern India.

With respect to the condition of these regions in ancient times we possess no very definite information. That they abounded with wealthy and powerful states is the general impression to be derived from Greek and Roman authors, and is abundantly supported by investigations into the annals of the Hindoos. Guzerat, the native country of the Banians, has in all ages occupied the first place among the minor states of India, and has been celebrated for the riches and intelligence of its inhabitants.[1] Under ambitious monarchs it has, on more than one occasion, held sway over the neighbouring Rajpoot States, and portions of the Concan, whilst its maritime supremacy over a long extent of coast has rarely been disputed. The commercial districts of Malabar presented a similar picture of prosperity. Inscriptions[2] have been found of an age considerably antecedent to the Christian era, which attest the care which was expended on facilitating internal communication, and are evidence of the early period at which Limyrica attained a respectable civilization. The accounts of Ibn Batuta, and other travellers in the middle ages, are filled with descriptions of the number of its cities and the fertility of its soil. When we come to consider the discoveries and settlements of

[1] Elph. India, p. 677, 679, &c.
[2] Elph. India, p. 428.

the Portuguese in the East, we shall find that their most formidable enemies were the mercantile states of Guzerat and Malabar, who made alliances with the Mamlukes of Egypt, and, in native craft, boldly attacked western adventurers, and frequently defeated them upon their own element. They were absolutely a strong naval power within a century from our own time, occupying the coast between Bombay and Goa, and practising piracy. They possessed a line of fortresses which were long deemed impregnable, frequently plundered English vessels, and for many years obliged the East India Company, at an expense of more than 50,000*l.*, to support an armed squadron for the purpose of keeping them in check. They were not finally destroyed until 1756, when Commodore James, with an English fleet, reduced their strong forts of Severndroog and Gheria, the Gibraltar of India, and annihilated their power.[1]

II. The second branch of native commerce was that conducted in *Ceylon*.

We are now treading on ground held sacred by no less than one-eighth of the human race. Ceylon and Adam's Peak are to the Buddhists of the East what the Fortunate Islands and the forked summit of snowy Olympus were to the Greeks of old. Again, to those of the Braminical persuasion, Ceylon is an Oriental Hesperides—a sea-girt paradise—the realm of eternal summer. It is a Hindoo land of lotus-eaters—a land, whose fruits and flowers perfumed the ocean for many a league, and

[1] See Macpherson's Commerce of India, p. 181.

where genial breezes never ceased to murmur among groves of cinnamon and spices. The bountiful gifts of nature, however, were almost surpassed by the magnificent works of man. ' They feign that countless palaces glittered with marble and rubies, whilst Lanca, the principal city, was surrounded with a wall of pure gold, and contained buildings of such peerless magnitude that the sun himself was daily lost in their vast colonnades.

Such is the gorgeous character of the fables concerning Ceylon, current throughout the whole of India from the very earliest times to the present day; and celebrated in the "Ramayana," a poem whose origin even in the age of Homer was lost in remote antiquity.[1] It relates how Sita, the Queen of Balla Rama, King of Oude, being carried off by the giant Ravana, monarch of Ceylon, her indignant spouse led an army into the Deccan, pursued Ravana into his island kingdom, and with the assistance of an army of monkeys under the command of Hunman, a deity whose image is everywhere found in Hindoo temples, gained a complete victory, recovered his queen, and slew her ravisher.

It would, we opine, be no wild conjecture to say that the gilded descriptions of Ramayana may have had their foundation in some reality, and are to be attributed to exaggerated reports of the opulence of Ceylon. If this could be asserted with the confidence of truth, it

[1] The Ramayana is much more ancient than the Mahabarat, the date of which cannot be fixed earlier than 1400 B. C. The Ramayana bears to the Mahabarat the same relation that the legends concerning the adventures of Hercules and other demi-gods, do to the Iliad and Odyssey. See Elph. India, p. 206.

would follow that the commerce between the eastern and western coasts of India was conferring wealth upon its emporia in Ceylon, when the trade of the Hamyarites and Tyrians was still in its infancy, and Abraham a sojourner in the land of Canaan. This were a mysterious subject for contemplation! We turn, however, to the certainty of authentic records.

Heeren, to whom we have had so frequently to acknowledge our obligations, has very fully investigated the ancient trade of this renowned island, and in a Latin dissertation which was read before the Göttingen Society in 1831, has most satisfactorily established the proposition that *Ceylon continued to be the common emporium of southern commerce for upwards of two thousand years.*[1]

The most definite account of this traffic found in ancient authors is that given by Cosmas, usually called Indicopleustes, an Egyptian merchant, and afterwards monk, who about A.D. 560 travelled for the purposes of commerce as far as Adule, a celebrated port of the Red Sea, at that time belonging to the King of Axum, the capital of Æthiopia or Abyssinia. Here he fell in with an acquaintance, one Sopater, who, together with others, had just visited Ceylon on business; and from their report Cosmas compiled the account of the island and its commerce, which is found in his "Topographica Christiana." As mercantile routes change but little in the East, and as his description not only tallies with the loose accounts of the same commerce found in Ptolemy

[1] See Asiatic Researches, Appendix xi.

and more ancient authors, but with the descriptions of travellers who visited India in the middle ages, as well as with what we know to have been the case when the Portuguese first made their appearance in the East; and, lastly, as in every respect it coincides with what, from the nature and position of the island, we should consider probable, we shall remark upon it at some length.

Taprobane[1] (*i. e.* Ceylon), was, he informs us, a large island in the Indian Ocean, called by the Hindoos Silediva, and situated beyond the pepper country, *i. e.*, beyond Limyrica, or the Malabar coast, whence the ancients obtained that commodity. It was celebrated as being the locality in which were found the finest hyacinth stones, or rubies,[2] and with these the inhabitants adorned their numerous temples. In particular, there was in one of them a ruby of great brilliance, and in size almost equal to the cone of a pine-tree. This stone, placed in an elevated and conspicuous situation, and illumined by the rays of the sun, reflected a blaze of light as curious as it was extraordinary. The island was subject to two monarchs, one of whom possessed the mountains, the elephants, and this luminous carbuncle; and the other enjoyed the more solid riches of domestic

[1] Taprobane is said to be derived from *tap*, the island of *Ravana*, who was conquered by Rama, as related in the Ramayana. Selandib, Serendiv, &c., are corruptions of Singhala-dwipa, or lion-raced, in allusion to a former king of Ceylon, said to have sprung from a lion. The names are Sanscrit.

[2] Ceylon has always been celebrated for its rubies.

industry, foreign trade, and a sea-board abounding in valuable harbours, of which that of Trincomalee, then, as at the present day, was a well-frequented roadstead, in which fleets from the whole of the East and West in safety rode out the fierce hurricanes of the Indian Ocean.

These ports were the resorts of merchantmen on the one side from every part of Western India, Persia, and Ethiopia, on the other, from the innermost recesses of the East, from China, and the Eastern Archipelago, whilst the island itself possessed a numerous fleet of ships belonging to its own merchants. The commodities in which this thriving traffic was engaged, were those productions of the East, for which there was always a demand in the West. From *Tznitza, i. e.*, China, there came *silk*, aloes, cloves, and sandal wood. These, according to Cosmas, were exchanged for the pepper of Malabar, and for the brass, cotton, and woollen fabrics, and precious woods of Callian, or Bombay; whilst to Scinde and the Punjaub, and to Persia, Yemen, and Adule, were forwarded the musk, castoreum, and spike-nard, which had arrived from Thibet and the Himalayas. How these latter articles were obtained, it would be difficult to say. The Periplus informs us that the silk, which the Greeks obtained at Musiris, was from Ganges, an emporium at the mouth of the great river of the same name, and that it was brought from some place at a considerable distance up the stream, where merchants obtained it by means of a caravan, which annually penetrated into Thina, *i. e.*, most probably to Ladak,

Lla-Ssa, or some emporium in Thibet, or Southern China. When we consider the extreme value of silk in ancient times, that it was sometimes absolutely worth more than its weight in gold, we shall not be surprised at its intense price justifying the expense of very circuitous routes for attaining a suitable market. We cannot, however, but suspect, that a large portion of these Chinese commodities, and among them silk, were brought to the ports of Ceylon, as is still the case, in what Pliny describes as square-built vessels whose timbers were not fastened with iron, but sewn with the strong fibres of the cocoa-nut, *i. e.*, in junks, which have in all ages unhesitatingly crossed the Bay of Bengal. From Ceylon to Musiris was an easy sail for coasters of the very smallest burthen.

" Thus," as Cosmas concludes, " the island of Silediva being situated almost in the middle of India, and producing the precious stone called the ruby, receives merchandise from all other countries, and supplies them in its turn, and is consequently a place of very great mercantile resort." It fact it was the grand Australasian market, and was frequented by all the numerous races which inhabit the islands and coasts of the Indian and Chinese seas. It was the Singapore of the ancient world.

In this description of commerce, there are some points which are most interesting to remark. The importance which Cosmas attaches to hyacinth stones, or rubies (for which it is still celebrated), being found in the island in considerable numbers, evidently viewing that

precious stone as the cause of all its prosperity, appears curious in this age, which has attached to capital a meaning so widely different.

Again, among the articles of commerce, it is extraordinary that neither cinnamon, which is a native of the island, nor ivory, are once noticed, although frequently mentioned by Pliny, and more ancient writers.

The native commerce, moreover, is represented as vastly superior to that carried on with the Arabian and Persian Gulfs. The cause of this must be sought in the fact that though merchants (as was the case with Sopater, from whom Cosmas derived his information) might occasionally penetrate from Adule or Ocelis to Ceylon, and though the discoveries of Hippalus had rendered it practicable to go from Alexandria to Musiris and back within the year, yet such journeys were rarely undertaken. Though we have all along represented merchandise as arriving in a continuous stream from the East to the West, it must not be inferred that goods belonged to the same individual, throughout the whole of their course. A case of spices from Ceylon was owned by many a different merchant before it was finally exposed for sale in the bazaars of Alexandria, or the *Vicus Thurarius* at Rome. It is altogether erroneous to imagine that in the times of the Ptolemies, and Romans, or even for many ages after the discovery of Hippalus, annual voyages were in the habit of being regularly made between Egypt and India, as they are now made between England and China. Pliny informs us that the arrival of Singhalese ambassadors at the Court of

Claudius, the Roman emperor, was regarded as a most astonishing event, and the account which they gave of the island, was viewed as something altogether strange and wonderful. Again, of 120 vessels destined for India, which Strabo[1] tells us he saw lying in the harbour of Myos Hormos, he never heard of more than one or two, which had absolutely undertaken that voyage. The reason of this is obvious. The productions of the distant East were forwarded westwards from port to port, and the Greek and Roman had little occasion to visit India for commodities which were always obtainable in the abundant and well-supplied markets of Arabia and Persia. We might remark too that a forty days' sail, without opportunities for refitting, caulking, and watering, was a trying voyage for a vessel but loosely built, and without any adequate protection by sheathing, or otherwise, against the shipworm and barnacle, and the myriad insects of the Southern seas. The voyage from Alexandria to Ceylon would have occupied eighty days, and where is the merchant, who, in an age when insurance and underwriting were unknown, would expose the precious wares of the East to the contingencies of such rude navigation?

These circumstances will account for the native trade of Ceylon—that which was carried on between the islands and continent of India itself—having been much more extensive than that to the distant ports of Arabia and Æthiopia. It was consequently almost entirely a *carrying trade*, and the indigenous productions of the

[1] Strabo, xi. p. 179.

island appear to have been so unimportant compared with this, as not even to have attracted the attention of Sopater, himself a merchant.

Lastly, Cosmas remarks, that, "there is also a church of Christians from *Persia*, under the inspection of a presbyter ordained in the latter country, together with a deacon and other ecclesiastical officers." It is not improbable that these were Nestorians whose *catholicus* was resident at Ctesiphon, and afterwards at Mosul. In fact, they were a branch of those Malabar Christians of St. Thomas,[1] whom the Portuguese discovered on their arrival in India, and whose simple devotion was offended at the mummeries of the Romish ritual. When required to bow to the image of the Virgin, they indignantly exclaimed, "We are Christians, not idolaters," and having endured uncorrupted the tortures and *auto-da-fé's* of the Inquisition of Goa, still exhibit in our own day the practice, if not the faith, of the fifth century. We have noticed this as a confirmation of the truth of the oft-repeated remark, that Christianity and commerce have ever gone hand in hand, and the missioner and the merchant, in ancient times, visited regions whither the Roman name and the Roman arms had never penetrated.

Observe again, that these Christians were from Persia,

[1] See Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 188. La Croze (Christianisme des Indes, tome i. p. 40 to 55) and Assemanni, an Armenian employed by the Papal See to collect and revise ancient Oriental authors, have both detected from his writings that Cosmas was himself a Nestorian. This singular circumstance was unknown to Montfauçon, his first editor.

and the whole trade of the island was in the hands of a race occupying the coast, and at constant war with the indigenous inhabitants of the interior. Lay parallel with this fact what we know of the connection always existing between Tyre and the Persian Gulf—the circumstance that the Persians themselves were never a maritime people—that the whole of the western coast of India has ever been intimately connected with that of Persia—and there will be nothing improbable in the supposition that these foreign settlers were either Tyrians, or at any rate of the same parent stock as were the Tyrians and Hamyarites. It was thus that they, as well as all maritime people, have constantly endeavoured to occupy islands in the vicinity of continents. It was thus that the Greeks seized the shores and islets of Asia Minor. It was thus that the English and Dutch founded nearly all their colonies. What an extensive idea does this give us of the commerce of the Phœnicians, which extended in one unbroken line from Albion to Tzinitza—from Britain to China!

As we proceed, we shall find further confirmation of this fact. The account of the island of Ceylon, given by Cosmas, has been considered before others; inasmuch as it has especial reference to its commerce. There remain, however, other descriptions, more ancient, and written without reference to this, which all conduct us to the same conclusions.

The geographer Ptolemy, who lived in the second century, is more than suspected of having derived from the log-books and charts of *Tyrians*, the materials for

his description of the world. He has dedicated an entire chapter to Ceylon, which he calls Salice, and informs us was formerly called Palæsimundum. Not only does he describe its shores and the interior with surprising accuracy, but he appears to have been acquainted with the Eastern Archipelago. Without difficulty we trace in the country which he calls Jabadia, whose capital was Argentea, Java, and the modern Acheen; and the Sunda Islands and Sinde are undoubtedly synonymous. He gives a correct account of India beyond the Ganges, and of the peninsula of Malacca, or the Golden Chersonese. He was aware of the existence of the sea beyond Java, and, like Pliny, speaks of its being navigated by junks, or, as he describes them, "vessels whose planks were fastened together with bolts of wood instead of iron." He knew that these seas were not only accessible to, but even frequented by navigators, and that Ceylon was their common emporium.

It is not improbable that Argentea may have occupied the position of the modern Acheen, and that the passage from Ceylon to that port, which would scarcely require half the time of the voyage from the Red Sea to Musiris, was made across the open sea, and regulated by the monsoons. Whether the Straits of Malacca and Penang, "those pillars of an Oriental Hercules," presented the same appearance of commercial activity which they have offered since the establishment of the English settlement at Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles, in the absence of all historical evidence we will

not venture to assert. Possibly at some future period there may be discovered, in the vicinity, ruins of important edifices or towns, or other proofs of former civilization, which may render such a supposition tenable.

The effects of commerce are everywhere the same. Ceylon, in ancient authors, is always represented as having long and prosperously existed under a regular form of government. The ambassadors, from its monarch, who made their appearance at Rome in the reign of Claudius, if we may give credit to the account of Pliny,[1] described its government as wisely and constitutionally administered. Later authors inform us that it was divided into no less than ten independent states, and its cities, or rather large villages, have been variously estimated as numbering from five to seven hundred.

The evidence of its former greatness still lingers in its ruins. When the English took possession of the island, they found, to their astonishment, stupendous remains of its early civilization. Besides the ruins of temples and towns, they discovered the traces of immense tanks, built of hewn stone, constructed for the irrigation of large tracts of country, and obviously the work of some thriving and well regulated community.

III. The third branch of native *commerce* was that *of the Ganges and the Coromandel coast.*

[1] Nat. Hist., v. 22.

Although the author of the Periplus describes boats at the mouth of the Indus as receiving the cargoes of vessels unable to cross the bar—although he represents pilot-boats at Barygaza as engaged in conducting vessels into the Gulf of Cambay, where then, as now, they were exposed to danger from the extensive banks of mud at the mouth of the Nerbudda, and the rapid rise of the tides—although he represents the whole of the West of India as covered with what he calls *local* emporia, and obviously engaged in an extensive coasting trade—it is not until we arrive at the east of Cape Comorin that we find mention of large vessels capable of crossing the open sea. Again, although Nearchus, the admiral commissioned by Alexander to explore the southern coast of Asia, saw no signs of commerce upon the Indus, and although of the vessels provided by the Macedonian monarch for crossing that stream by the diligence of his general, Hephæstion, and his ally, the King of Taxila, not more than *two* (as is expressly remarked by Arrian[1]) were *triacontors*, or impelled by thirty oarsmen, it is not improbable that the Ganges then, as at the present moment, was covered with boats, which were the means of communication between the populous and civilized kingdoms which everywhere lined its shores. There are many reasons for concluding that the inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges and the coast of Coromandel were early celebrated for the maritime enterprise which they still exhibit; and the trade of the eastern coast—a trade in which probably no Greek or Roman ever

[1] De Exped. Alex., v. 319.

mixed—was more thriving and extensive than that of Barygaza or Musiris.

The town of Ganges, situated at no great distance from Calcutta, was the grand emporium for Bengal. The great river of the same name formed the highway for all the inland commerce, and we are informed that cargoes were constantly floated down the stream from Palibothra, whither they had arrived by land, along roads which led directly across the north of India from Taxila on the Indus. It appears that Chinese commodities arrived by this route, and, as we have seen, were exported from the city of Ganges to Musiris in Malabar. Of the mode in which they were obtained we can, unfortunately, render no very definite account. A part of them probably came through Thibet, and we may point to the pilgrimages which are constantly made, by those of the Braminical persuasion to Mount Meru and the sources of the Ganges, and by the Buddhists to the court of the Dalai Lama, as the most likely means by which this traffic was conducted.

In connection with Ganges, the Periplus mentions another branch of commerce, with a nation far to the north of India, and bordering on Thina, called the Sesatæ, a set of "ill-formed, broad-faced, and flat-nosed people." As, however, they must have been plainly Mongols, and yet traded in *betel*, which is a production of the tropics, the account is surrounded with insuperable difficulties. We pass on to the maritime commerce of Bengal.

The country between the Deccan and the Ganges

then, as now, was either impenetrable in consequence of dense forests and jungles, or infested with plundering tribes. The traffic between the two regions was managed by vessels which, to avoid the inhabitants of the shore, steered directly down the Bay of Bengal to Coromandel, or even to Ceylon. An intercourse appears to have been thus preserved between Palibothra, the capital of the Prasü, which is identified with Allahabad, and Palæsimundum, the capital of Ceylon. Pliny,[1] referring to this navigation, specifies the length of the voyage, and informs us that the seamen did not direct their course by observations on the stars, but, like the Norsemen of the German seas, they determined the position of the nearest land by the flight of birds which they had taken with them, and which they let go at intervals. Our remarks upon Ceylon apply equally to the coast of Coromandel, and there can be little doubt that its seamen had early communication with China and the Eastern Archipelago.[2]

With regard to its principal towns, Cosmas mentions Caber, whose name may probably be traced in the river Caveri, as a commercial entrepôt, but in classic authors we look in vain for any notice of the trade or history of

[1] Nat. Hist., vi. 22, remarks that the voyage was originally said to be one of thirty days, but that as it was undertaken "papyraceis navibus armamentisque Nili," *i.e.* in such ill-made, fragile country craft as are used on the Nile, it might be considered but a voyage of seven days in properly built vessels. The former account, however, is much more likely to have been correct.

[2] Pliny, vi. 22, tells us that the Singhalese ambassadors to the Court of Claudius reported that they were engaged in commerce with the Seres.

Mavalipuram, whose Cyclopian ruins are as mysterious as they are immense. Ptolemy, however, represents this coast as thickly studded with commercial towns, and possibly in *Maliarpha*, which he places in the same region and describes as an "emporium," we read the garbled name of this once magnificent city. Of the others, the Periplus mentions Masalia, the modern Masulipatam, as celebrated for its cotton manufactures, and Ganges, at the mouth of the river of the same name, as the best market for betel, pearls, and the finest species of muslin, and names the particular port whence the passage was commonly made to Chrysa or Malacca.

Of the maritime enterprise of the countries bordering on the Ganges, we can give some further account from Eastern records. The Ramayana refers to intercourse as existing between Hindostan and Anga and Yamala, which are interpreted by every native *pundit* or commentator to mean Ava and Malacca, and the nature of the intervening countries would render it impossible for the communication to have taken place in any other way than by water. The annals of Java speak of Hindoos, who sailed boldly across the open sea from Calinga in Orissa, landed upon that island, and civilized the inhabitants, and by establishing the era, still subsisting, have settled the date of their arrival as 75 years before Christ. That this was no solitary colony, but the immigration of a numerous people, who kept up an intercourse with, and gradually introduced the arts of the mother-state, is attested by the magnificent Hindoo

remains which exist throughout the island.[1] A Chinese pilgrim, who at the end of the fourth century visited Java, found it entirely populated by Hindoos, and sailed from the Ganges to Ceylon, and from Ceylon to Java, and from Java to China, in vessels manned by crews professing the Braminical religion.

Although, in the course of ages, this off-shoot from the parent stock has retained neither its religion nor its language, its men of learning still make use of a dialect of the Sanscrit, as the language of history, religion, and poetry, and have actually transferred the whole scene of the Mahabarat, with all its heroes, cities, and kings, from the banks of the Jumna and Ganges to the rivers of their own island; and the Bramin pilgrim there recognises, like Æneas at the Court of Helenus of Epirus—

> . . . "parvam Trojam, simulataque magnis
> Pergama, et arentem Zanthi cognomine rivum."[2]

[1] Elph. India, 169. Journal of Asiatic Society, ix. 136-138.
[2] Virg., iii. 350.

CHAPTER VI.

CARAVAN ROUTES BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE EAST.

"Mercator urbibus prodest, ut medicus ægrotis."—*Seneca.*

A VARIETY of causes conspired in ancient times to render the land communication between the East and West more extensive and important than that by sea. Vast was the risk which in its infancy attended navigation—especially that of the open ocean; not merely from the violence of the elements, and the dangers of an unknown sea, but, what was more pernicious, from the attacks of pirates who infested every creek, and regarded a disabled vessel, or a defenceless cargo, not simply as their lawful plunder, but as a direct god-send from their deities. Commodities of small bulk in proportion to their value, such as were the majority of those imported from the distant East, were rarely entrusted to a means of conveyance whose cheapness was more than counterbalanced by its unnumbered perils. Again, the more important rivers of central Asia, all, without a single exception, flow in a northerly or southerly direction, and in consequence are of little service in facilitating the transport of goods from the East to the West. In addition, too, to this, their course lies through vast level tracts of pasture and *steppes*, ill-adapted for

supporting a considerable population, and unsupplied with timber, iron, and the other commodities requisite for ship-building. Owing to these circumstances, the river navigation of Asia never attained that importance which it possesses in Europe and America, and commerce has been conducted almost entirely by land.

The instrument which has rendered this kind of traffic practicable is the *Camel*, an animal which has not inaptly been termed "*the ship of the desert.*" He is a native of the whole of central and southern Asia. One species endures the scorching *sirocco*, and the perpetual glow of Arabia: another larger and more hardy thrives amid the still more trying vicissitudes of heat and cold which characterize "the Land of *Grass*"—the wide unsheltered *steppes* of Mongolia.[1] In the case of both species, a small quantity of food is sufficient for their wants, and that most portions of the desert at intervals supply. They endure hunger for a lengthened period: as for thirst, their stomach is so constructed that wherever it can be obtained, they imbibe a supply of water sufficient for the necessities of many days. In addition to which, they possess all the vaunted qualities of the horse. They are in the highest degree hardy, strong, docile, and tractable. With a burden of a thousand pounds' weight, they proceed with but few interruptions at a slow but a uniform pace, in which they persevere to the end of a long journey.

Companies of thousands, nay, tens of thousands of

[1] The Bactrian camel has two humps, that of Arabia only one. This is the chief external distinction between the two species.

such animals, each laden with a burden such as we have described, have, under the name of caravans, from time immemorial traversed the deserts of the East. We may conceive some idea of their magnitude and importance in an age when the majority of Oriental commodities reached the West by this means, from what is known of the great caravans which at the present time annually set out from Cairo and Damascus, for Mecca and Medina. That from Egypt often consists of 50,000 persons, and a still greater number of camels are employed in carrying water, provisions, and merchandise.[1] That from Syria is frequently as large and numerous. The quantity of commodities which formerly were transported in this primitive fashion from Eastern Asia to Europe must have been enormous. In its passage through the intervening countries, it produced but in a more limited and somewhat different degree the same effects as that which has been forwarded by sea.

We have already drawn attention to the numerous caravan-routes which from the whole of Syria converged to Tadmor: we have traced those of Arabia, whose centres were Gerrha, Hadramaut, and Petra, and we have described the route of that great highway from Mesopotamia to Bactria, and the most remote regions of the East, which passed through the far-famed Caspian Gates. In the present chapter, we propose to consider, in addition to this last, those more northerly routes leading from the East to the West, which, in conse-

[1] See Robertson's India, p. 403, &c.

quence of geographical obstacles, were totally unconnected with the others, and converged to different termini.

An inspection of the map of Asia will show that, though interspersed in almost every direction with mountain chains, yet the one by far the most important, and containing the highest summits on the earth's surface, stretches from east to west. The Caucasus, forming a vast wall between the Caspian and Black Seas, is the commencement of this range, which at a less elevation is continued between Persia and Independent Tartary. In Hindoo Cush and the Himalayas it attains its greatest altitude and is most impassable. This chain has naturally divided the caravan routes of Asia into two grand divisions. Those on the south starting from India itself and traversing Beloochistan, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Syria, and terminating in emporia on the Mediterranean; whilst those on the north, setting out from China or Thibet, and journeying across the regions to the south of the great deserts of Tartary, converged to cities on the shores of the Euxine. These last routes, though lacking the importance of those already described, were nevertheless highways of considerable traffic, and in the middle ages contributed with other causes to give great political importance to the regions through which they passed, and in ancient times rendered the cities on the Euxine large and prosperous.

The little which Europeans in every age have known of the interior of Asia renders any very accurate description of these routes impossible. In the times of

the Parthians, and afterwards under Mongol rule, it is not improbable that throughout nearly the whole continent royal highways were established and *caravanserais* erected at suitable distances. The necessity of maintaining lines for military communication, and insuring the allegiance of distant conquests, would require no less. Marco Polo and others who visited these regions in the middle ages confirm by their remarks this supposition. Judging from the uniformity and averseness to change which marks the character of the Asiatic, we may venture to conclude that in many cases the same routes are traversed at the present day as were traversed three thousand years ago. Their importance, however, from the conveyance of all the more valuable produce of the East to Europe now taking place by sea, is incalculably diminished, and doubtless many are entirely deserted. Hence, for many years, our information concerning Central Asia has been absolutely stationary. In reference to some districts we have scarcely made any advance upon the knowledge of Herodotus.

Would that we possessed the *Arimaspea*,[1] an epic poem of Aristeas, the Proconnesian, whose mysterious death and reappearance 300 years afterwards in Italy are related with such *naïveté* by the Father of History. Inspired by Apollo, he sang of the wars of the Arimaspians and Issedones; of "the people with one eye," and "the gold-guarding griffins." He mixed, no doubt, truth with fable, but he sang of events of which he

[1] See Herod., iv. 13.

himself was a witness—events which changed the position of almost every tribe in Scythia, from the north to the south, from the Hyperboreans to the Cimmerians. Probably it was from this author that Herodotus gained that accurate acquaintance with the Scythian tribes which he everywhere exhibits. If the poem had survived to our own time we should have some clue to guide us in describing the ancient intercourse between Europe and Northern Asia, and the commerce of Tartary, which, unlike that of Syria and Mesopotamia, has left no evidence of its existence in the silent but expressive ruins of populous cities and magnificent temples.

The direction of this route, which is first described by Herodotus, has been investigated by Heeren.[1] The result of his inquiries lead us to conclude that, from the Greek cities at the mouths of the Borysthenes and the other rivers which fall into the north of the Euxine and the Sea of Azov, its course lay first nearly northwards, and crossed the Volga and Ural Mountains at no great distance from the present city of Orenburg. Thence one branch penetrated to the Issedones, an active and enterprising race of Tartars, who traded, probably in Chinese commodies, with their neighbours to the east, the Seres and Sinæ, whilst from the different nations of Siberia, which formed their northern frontier, they obtained immense quantities of the most valuable furs. For the purchase of these a trading station,

[1] See Heeren's A. Researches, vol. ii. p. 28.

slobode, or wooden city,[1] called Gelonus, was established in the country of the Budini, somewhere to the south of the present Tobolsk, by the inhabitants of the Greek cities along the shores of the Euxine.

Another branch diverged southwards from Orenburg, and traversing the regions between the Caspian and the Sea of Aral, passed through what is now the modern Khiva and Samarcand, the ancient Maracanda. Thence it penetrated westwards to Thibet and China, whilst branch routes led to Balk, Bokhara, and across the mountains to Herat, the ancient Hecatompylos, once the capital of the Parthian empire, and connected it with the great Indian routes described by Arrian. It may be remarked in passing that this route is still traversed by caravans from Orenburg to Khiva, whilst that from Orenburg to the north is almost deserted in consequence of the fur-trade now passing northwards to St. Petersburg and the Baltic, instead of, as formerly, southwards to the Euxine.

The character and history of this latter route, disinterred, as it were, from the ruins of antiquity and the verses of Aristeas, have been elucidated by German scholars,[2] in their researches into the early history of Russia and the republic of Novgorod. The country of

[1] Herod., iv. 108. Each side of this city was thirty stades, *i.e.* about three miles, so that it must have been a considerable place. Observe that the Greeks themselves never went further than to the Argippæi and the boundaries of the Issedones. In fact they had no direct communication with the Sinæ and Seres until long after the Christian era.

[2] Lehrberg's Researches relative to the illustration of ancient Russian history, &c., and Krug's Geographical Position and History of Jugria. See Heeren's A. R., ii. 28.

Jugria, whose name at once reminds us of the Jurcæ,[1] a Scythian nation referred by Herodotus to the same regions, has always been celebrated for the animals which supply the rarest and most valuable furs. It forms at present the greater portion of the provinces of Perm and Tobolsk, extending for a considerable distance on both sides of the Ural range, but still, as in ancient times, the more costly peltries are found in the greatest abundance to the east of these mountains. It can be shown that, down even to the sixteenth century, this commerce was still in existence, and caravans from Bokhara and India conveyed to Novgorod and Tobolsk the productions of the East. Moreover, the activity of this trade was dependent not merely upon the supply of furs, but also upon that of horses, camels, and other beasts of burden, and lastly upon the discovery of a metal which, in every age, has tended to develope commercial resources. The country of the Jugrians abounded with gold. This was the magnet which attracted the Greeks of the Borysthenes into these inhospitable regions. It was *nuggets* from the Ural which, from the days of Herodotus to the age of the Stuarts, introduced the silks of the Seres and the manufactures of the Indies into the markets of Russia and Siberia.

With these remarks upon a course of commerce so curious and unexpected, we proceed to the investigation of the principal routes which, from the Greek cities on the north of the Euxine, penetrated into the most

[1] Herod., iv. 22.

distant regions of Tartary and India. As in ancient times, the carrying trade of the Mediterranean was mainly in the hands of the Tyrians, so that of the Euxine was conducted almost entirely by the Greeks of Asia Minor. Of these the inhabitants of Miletus were the most conspicuous. Emigrating from the sterile hills of Attica and Bœotia, they had deprived the Lelegians and Carians, enterprising maritime people, extensively engaged in commerce and piracy, which, in remote times, were not unfrequently kindred occupations, from the shores and harbours of Asia Minor. Forcing these nations from the sea-board to the interior, they succeeded to their cities and traffic, and founded Miletus, the queen of Ionian cities, the rival of Tyre, and the faithful mother of a hundred[1] fair colonies many of which rivalled and, in the end, surpassed the parent state. Her settlements, scattered along the whole coast of the Propontis and Euxine, occupied every creek which afforded a safe anchorage, or a convenient position for conducting commercial intercourse with the interior. Cyzicus and Heraclea gave her the command of the trade of Bithynia. Sinope, long celebrated for the wealth which it derived from its fisheries,[2] together with Amisus and Trapezus, were

[1] The best account of Miletus and her colonies is to be found in the probationary essay of Professor Rambach, De Mileto ejusque coloniis.

[2] The description of fish caught was the πηλαμὺς, or mud-fish, probably a species of tunny, still called at Malta the *palamyde*. Vast shoals of this migratory fish issue annually from the sea of Azov, and spread along the shores of the Euxine down to the Bosphorus.

the colonies which bartered her Lydian wares against the productions of Pontus. On the eastern coast of the Euxine were founded the important cities of Phasis, Phanagoria, and Dioscurias, marts at which, by the intervention of 130 languages,[1] she traded with the myriad tribes of Caucasus for gold and slaves.[2] The countries to the north and east of the Black Sea were then, as now, so extensively engaged in this detestable traffic of human beings, that among the Greeks and Romans the name of Scythian was synonymous with that of slave. More important, however, than these settlements were those in the Ukraine and the Crimæa, the majority of which were founded seven hundred years before Christ, to such an antiquity does this commerce extend. The principal of these were Tanais, at the mouth of the Don, Panticapæum, in the Tauric peninsula, whose markets, according to Strabo,[3] were frequented by no less than seventy different tribes; and Olbia[4] or Miletopolis, the modern Cherson, at the mouth of the Borysthenes, at no great distance from Odessa.

These, but especially the latter, formed the termini of the caravans from Jugria, and from the regions to

[1] Phasis, according to Herod. (ii. 103-105), was founded by the Egyptians; it was subject, however, to Miletus. Pliny mentions 130 as the number of languages spoken at Dioscurias.

[2] I have little doubt that Persian, if not Indian commodities, formed a part of this commerce, though not mentioned. The gaily dressed Georgians and Mingrelians deal largely in silks and such like goods at the present day.

[3] Pp. 757 and 761.

[4] Called also Borysthenes and Olbropolis.

the South of the Caspian. All the different productions of the interior of Asia filled their markets to profusion, and were exchanged with mutual advantage for the manufactures of Greece, and the fabrics of Miletus, whose flocks were so long renowned for the softness and whiteness of their fleeces, the *Milesia vellera* of Roman writers. In addition to her Eastern commerce, Olbia, like Odessa in the present day, was the outlet for the corn of the Ukraine. The Scythian tribes who dwelt along the banks of the Dnieper and Dneister, unlike the rest of their nation had, according to Herodotus,[1] early attained to the knowledge of agriculture, and cultivated their soil, naturally prolific,[2] not simply for the purpose of consuming its productions themselves, but for exportation to foreign countries. This trade was managed by the Greek merchants of Olbia, who in ancient times exported corn thence into Athens,[3] whose territory did not produce sufficient of this commodity to meet the consumption, just as the Greek merchants of Odessa, at the present moment are importing from the same regions grain into Liverpool, to supply the deficiencies of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Such was the nature of the commerce of Olbia and Greece. A trade in corn, in slaves, in peltries, and in

[1] Herod. iv. 17.

[2] For the present condition of these regions and the character of the corn-trade of Odessa see Shirley Brooks' South of Russia.

[3] Demosth. in Lept. p. 254. For an account of the Athenian policy in the Euxine, and the importance which they attached to the corn-trade of the Chersonese see an article in the *Journal des Debats*, Nov. 18, 1853.

Eastern commodities. In early times, when this was confined almost entirely to Miletus, we can trace its effects in the opulence and political consideration of that well-known city. For several ages she was the leading state of Asia Minor, and a most favoured subject, if not an independent ally of the Persian monarchs, We find her citizens assisting Darius with their ships and engineering talent in crossing the Ister, and invading Scythia, because such an expedition, be its issue whatever it might, was pretty sure, by opening out new regions for her enterprise, to develope still further her commercial resources. When, however, the yoke of subjection galled the Ionian Greeks, we find Miletus the first to engage in open resistance, and capable of equipping a fleet of not less than 100 *triremes.* At the suppression of the Ionian revolt, Miletus was destroyed, and although she rose again into a considerable city, and even rashly ventured to measure her strength with Alexander, she never recovered that importance which she possessed when monopolizing the trade of Olbia and the Euxine.

In her prosperity, however, her busy citizens preceded, if they did not surpass, the rest of their race in the arts of civilization. Their addiction to literature and science, is attested by the fact, that their city was the birthplace, and fostered the genius of Cadmus and Hecatæus, the earliest Greek *logographers* or historians, that she produced the astronomer, the first to calculate an eclipse, that the first elements of geometry, mathe-

matics, and geography, and the first writings of romance[1] were the invention of her citizens. Finally, to crown all, from her sprang Philosophy. It was Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, natives of Miletus, who founded the Ionian school—that school which produced Socrates, Plato, the Academicians, and the Peripatetics, and whose opinions, for more than two thousand years, have influenced, and do still influence, the character and feelings of the whole civilized world.

[1] Romances among the Romans were called Milesiaca. It may perhaps be questioned whether Aristides, the first novelist, was a native of Miletus: at any rate the scene of his romances were laid there. They were usually very indelicate.

CHAPTER VII.

SAILING TO INDIA BY THE MONSOONS.

"Thou makest the winds to blow in their seasons."—*Ecclesiasticus.*

Religious scruples and national timidity have in all ages deterred the great mass of the Hindoos from maritime pursuits. Like the modern Armenians, however, their wealthy merchants, although not sailors themselves, frequently freighted vessels for the distant regions of Yemen and Africa. These were manned either by Arabs or by Banians, a sort of caste of sailors from the Peninsula of Guzerat, who, according to Arrian, for commercial purposes had establishments on the north side of the island of Dioscorides, or Socotra.[1] It is an opinon upheld by many that the civilization of the Egyptians, if not the nation itself, originally came from India to Nubia, and thence descended along the valley of the Nile, as is attested by the position and character of their architectural remains. On the respect due to this opinion we offer no remark; it may be interesting, however, to notice that between the coast of Africa and the port of Gallian, which is situated over against those mysterious rock temples of Elephanta which have been so often com-

[1] See Heeren, A. R., ii. 285, and Periplus, p. 17.

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pared with similar excavations at Ipsambul, there existed, in times very ancient indeed, a thriving commerce conducted by a tribe of Hindoos. If, then, the theory of the Hindoo descent of the Egyptians merit attention, the earliest types of the temples of Nubia must be sought for in the island of Socotra and the habitable districts of Africa, which lie around the straits of Bab-el-mandeb.

In addition to this Hindoo commerce, the Arabs, according to the Periplus, traded largely from India to their own country and thence to Africa. Frankincense, which was the production of Yemen, and for which there was as great a demand in India as in Europe, was bartered for sugar (cane honey), corn, rice, and cotton goods. These again were transported to Zanguebar, *i. e.*, to the Black or Caffre coast.[1] It is not impossible that the Caffre race, to which an Arab origin is usually attributed, may have sprung from commercial settlements; and, as is the tradition, may have afterwards received an accession to its numbers from the immigration of those idolatrous Arabs who refused to embrace the religion of Mahomet.

Again, with regard to this Arab navigation, which, be it observed, was entirely independent of the Græco-Arabian trade previously described, Arrian informs us that it was "*regularly managed*," an expression which, applied to those seas, must mean, if it means anything, that it was regulated according to the monsoons. The seamen of Arabia and India must have long remarked

[1] Heeren, A. R., ii. p. 300, &c.

the regularity with which the periodic winds of those regions blow for one portion of the year from the south-west, and for the other portion from the north-east. It is not improbable, though we possess no direct evidence of the fact, that they may have sometimes boldly stretched across the ocean from Bąb-el-mandeb to Malabar. The discovery, however, of this method of sailing is attributed to more modern times.

Unacquainted with the compass, and possessed of no trustworthy method of accurately determining their position by means of the heavenly bodies, the ancient navigators in all countries accomplished their voyages by sailing along the coast from promontory to promontory. Although the shores of Italy and Sicily were well known to the Greeks, there is reason to suppose that until the Christian era, the voyage from Athens to Syracuse was always performed by vessels which, first sailing to Corcyra, and there crossing the Adriatic in its narrowest part, coasted along the South of Italy, until within sight of Sicily, by this course more than doubling the length of a much-frequented voyage.[1] The first deviation from this tedious method of navigation took place in the Indian Ocean.

No sooner had the Romans become possessed of Egypt, than they acquired a taste as well for its own productions, as for the luxuries which it had long imported from Arabia and the East. The India trade received a fresh impulse, and was prosecuted more vigorously and extensively. The Greek merchants of

[1] See Thucyd., v. 32; vii., 17, &c.

the Red Sea, who previously had ventured but rarely into the open ocean, now occasionally penetrated to India itself. Soon after the Christian era, Hippalus, the commander of a vessel engaged in this trade, either intentionally or by accident, steered a direct course from the mouth of the Arabian Gulf, and was carried by the south-western monsoon, which afterwards received his name, to Musiris, an emporium on the coast of Malabar. This, the greatest maritime effort of the ancient world, revealed another route to the East, as bold as it was novel; and until some direct overland communication with that country shall be effected by steam, will always remain the shortest and most natural method of reaching India. The unvarying regularity with which the monsoons blow in the same direction, prevents all loss from calms or opposing winds. In ancient times, they rendered the use of the compass unnecessary, and were a better guide than distant headlands, or observations of the stars rudely taken, and still more rudely calculated.

Pliny the elder, an author[1] remarkable for his ardour in describing what was curious, has fortunately left us a detailed account of the particular course of the commerce which was conducted in this channel from Alexandria to Musiris. It was reserved however, for an age succeeding his own by several centuries, fully to develope its character and capabilities. He tells us that the commodities destined for India, were conveyed up the Nile for 300 miles to Coptos. This, with the assist-

[1] Nat. Hist., vi. 23.

ance of the Etesian winds, was effected in twelve days. Thence, for 258 miles, they were carried almost directly south to Berenice, a port on the Arabian Gulf. This journey was also accomplished in twelve days by a caravan, which, in consequence of the heat, always travelled during the night, and regulated its halting places, nearly all of which were dedicated to Greek deities,[1] by the conveniency of watering. One may conjecture that it was the horrors of the desert, and the barbarous character of the Ichthyophagi[2] which induced them to undertake this long journey, when by a short route of scarcely 70 miles, they could have reached the modern port of Cosseir.

From Berenice, ships strongly armed, and carrying companies of archers as a protection against the pirates, which infested the shores of the Red Sea, took their departure in the summer, and in 30 days reached Ocelis, the modern Gella, at the straits of Bab-el-mandeb, at no great distance from Aden. Either thence, or from Canan or Mocha, which lie further east on the Arabian coast, they sailed in 40 days by the south-west monsoon to Musiris, or, when this harbour was infested by pirates, to Necanidon (Nelkinda), a town, which in Pliny's time belonged to the kingdom of Paudion, a

[1] *E. g.* Didyme, Aphrodito, Hydræum Jovis, Hydræum Apollinis, &c. One station was called H. Phœnicon, and points to the Tyrians as having originally availed themselves of this route across the desert.

[2] Possibly it was the want of water which prevented them from striking directly across the desert. Herodotus does not represent the Ichthyophagi as savages.

monarch who ruled over the Pepper Country, and whose capital was Modusa, the modern Madura. The return voyage began in December, and occupied about the same period of time, so that it was possible, though in all probability this rarely occurred, to perform the whole trip within the year.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMMERCE OF THE VENETIANS, GENOESE, CATALANS, &c., WITH INDIA.

"Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee;
And was the safeguard of the West; the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth—
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty."

NEVER were the effects of commerce more marked than in the case of those European nations which, in the middle ages, were engaged in the trade with India. In most times and countries it has been the boast of religion that it has civilized the people among whom it has dwelt. Literature, the arts and sciences have put in their claim for a share in this glory. Nowhere, however, can there be found a subject to which the meed of praise is more justly due than to commerce, which in the middle ages may be said to have preserved civilization alive, when everything threatened it with annihilation. In the republics of Italy were preserved the germs of those principles which were to deliver Europe from barbarism. Petty trade and petty industry were not sufficient to give rise to communities such as these. "It was commerce on a grand scale, maritime commerce, but especially the commerce of the East

and West, which gave them birth." Foremost among these were the Venetians, the Genoese, the Florentines, and the Pisans.

We have shown how, at this time, the goods of India reached the shores of the Mediterranean; how those which came by the way of Ormuz and the Persian Gulf were carried up the Euphrates, or up the Tigris to Bagdad or Mosul, thence they were conveyed across the Syrian desert, some direct to Tyre, or Tripoli, or Scanderoon; others to some port on the Orontes, whence they reached Antioch, or were transported to Aleppo; whilst the greatest portion passed up the Red Sea, and thence to Alexandria, the great entrepôt of the East and West. The earliest people who conveyed it thence were *Venetians.*

Long before Genoa, Pisa, and Amalfi, which were subsequently their chief maritime competitors, had risen into importance, they were the exclusive factors between Europe and the Levant. The few exiles who had fled from the rage of Attila—the last relics of Aquileia, which the Huns in reward for its gallant defence, "had so levelled that it was even without ruins,"—had risen to be a powerful republic. Defended by the intricacies of the lagunes and the barrenness of the Rialto from foreign invasion, Venice soon became the emporium of the Adriatic. How extensive was its Oriental trade even in the earliest times, may be conjectured from the fact that, in the ninth century, we read on one occasion of as many as ten of her vessels being at the same time in the port of Alexandria.

It was the Crusades, however, which gave the great stimulus to her commerce, and brought her into political relations with the rest of the world. By the successes of her Doge, the aged and illustrious Dandolo, at the termination of the fourth Crusade, she found herself in possession of some of the most advantageous trading ports in the Mediterranean, and her Doge received the proud title of Despot of Romania, lord of one-fourth and one-eighth of the Roman empire. Her trade in this way became more extensive than ever—penetrated every corner of Europe, and gave her a consideration among the neighbouring states such as no commercial city had ever before possessed.

She had soon a long range of maritime stations from the mouths of the Po to that of the Don, along all the coasts of the Mediterranean. The produce of her silk looms and glass manufactories, both introduced from the East, penetrated into every country of Europe. Spain and England contributed their richest fleeces for the fabrication of her unrivalled cloths; and for linen, the flax of Lombardy furnished inexhaustible materials. Gilt leather, liqueurs, confectionery, and waxen tapers, an immense consumption of which was caused by the peculiar services of the Roman Catholic church, swelled the list of her exports. Chemical preparations of every sort, required either by medicine or the arts, were made in Venice. She decorated the palaces of Europe with splendid mirrors—the savage Africans with toys and beads. Her press sent forth the noblest editions of the classics. Aldus, and his sons for two generations,

adorned our libraries with the most splendid specimens of typography.

Such was Venice, and such were her exports, in the fifteenth century, when she had attained her full vigour, and was not yet ruined by the discoveries of Di Gama. That it was her Indian commerce which was at the bottom of all this activity we learn from every quarter. Muratori tells us that, of the Italian nations, the Amalfians and Venetians supplied all Europe with the precious produce and manufactures of the East. Sir John Mandeville informs us that, in his time, the Venetian merchants went to Ormuz, in the Persian Gulf; that for their commodities from thence the entrepôt between Asia and Europe was Famagusta, in Cyprus, which he describes as one of the greatest ports in the world. From the records of our own nation, we find Oriental commodities constantly imported into Britain by the Venetians, Genoese, and Catalans. In the bitter invectives against the Venetians of Louis Helian, French ambassador to the Germanic powers associated in the League of Cambray, it is one of the gravest charges which he brings against them, that they got their commodities through the Mahometan; and he describes them as neither Turks nor Christians, but a sect occupying a middle station between good and bad angels, belonging neither to heaven or hell.

It is, however, from a pamphlet of Marino Sanuto, called, "The Secrets of the Faithful," that we learn the mysteries of the trade of Venice. Sanuto was a Venetian nobleman, and intimately acquainted with the

commerce which he describes. He looked upon intercourse with the Mahometan as a moral crime, and proposed that the Pope should summon Europe to suppress it by means of an armed force. With these extraordinary proposals we have no concern. He describes, however, the route which the greatest portion of Eastern commerce took during the fourteenth century. He tells us that formerly, and even down to his own time, it used to take place by the way of the Persian Gulf. The merchandise of India, especially from Mahabar (Malabar) and Cambeth (Cambay), was first conveyed to Hormus (Ormuz), a port on the Persian Gulf, and was thence transported to Bassora, on the Euphrates, all which places belonged to the Tartars. From Bassora it passed up the Tigris to Baldac (Bagdad), and thence by inland navigation to Antioch and Licia, where it was embarked for Europe on board the vessels of Venice and Genoa. That of late, however, the merchants of the southern part of Arabia had recovered their old commerce. The trade came to Ahaden (Aden), thence to Chus (ancient Coptos), on the Nile, and thence to Alexandria. This, observe, was the old route of the time of the Ptolemies. He informs us, however, that some articles of small size, but great value, were still brought by the old course. He mentions with indignation the wealth which the Sultan of Egypt by this means indirectly drained from Christendom. On an immense number of articles, a long list of which he gives, a duty of not less than *one third of their value* was charged at Alexandria.

Such was the commerce—such were the resorts—of the Venetians in their most prosperous times. Nor was their political power less extensive. From a poor community of exiles who gained a precarious subsistence by fishing in the lagunes, they became, in about 800 years, a state whose power and pecuniary credit was second to none in Europe. Out of a few scattered huts grew up a city of palaces, full to overflowing with all the objects of wealth and refinement, the favoured abode of literature and the polite arts. The ancient Dogado, which barely comprehended the lagunes, held sway over the fairest provinces of Northern Italy. On the adjoining *terra firma* the principality of Ravenna, Trevisano and its dependencies, Padua, Vicenza, and Verona acknowledged her superiority. The possession of Friuli made her powerful in Istria. Zara, Spoleto, and the Dalmatic islands connected her with Albania; whilst the islands in the Ionian and Ægæan Seas swelled her revenue, and with those of Rhodes, Cyprus, and Candia, made her supreme in the Mediterranean.

To become allied to, or to depress a state so opulent and powerful was frequently, for many years, the grand object of European diplomacy. The court of her Doge surpassed all others, as well in its splendour as in the subtilty of its intrigues. It speaks volumes for her importance, that the first general confederacy which was formed by the leading states of Europe was formed for the depression of her power. This was the *League of Cambray.*

From the bitter vituperation of Louis Helian, whom

we have before quoted, we learn the feelings of envy with which she was regarded by the Emperor Maximilian and the French king, the leading princes in that combination. "From the reluctant confession of her adversaries, we learn duly to appreciate the gigantic might of Venice." Helian declares that she is never to be forgiven for having dared to encounter in the field the armies of the four great confederated princes; for having taken from the King of Hungary 300 islands, two extensive provinces, twelve episcopal cities, and a line of sea-board 500 miles in length. That she had dared repeatedly to triumph over the emperors of Constantinople, the lords of Padua and Verona, the dukes of Milan, Ferrara, and Mantua, the emperors of the West, the popes, and the kings of Naples. "Gods!" exclaims the orator, "what is the abyss, what is the bottomless ocean, which could absorb and engulph so vast possessions at once! Not a century has elapsed since these fishermen emerged from their bogs; and no sooner have they placed their foot on *terra firma*, than they have acquired greater dominion by perfidy than Rome won by arms during the long course of 200 years. They have already concerted plans to bridge the Don, the Rhine, the Seine, the Rhone, the Tagus, and the Ebro, and to establish their rule in every province of Europe. These are the people who speak of themselves as the sole possessors of nobility, as the only sages of the earth. For us who do not walk the streets in purple, nor hoard treasure in our coffers, nor crowd our buffets with plate, we in

their eyes are barbarians, sots, and idiots; they hate us, they scorn us, they insult us; and both French and Germans are held up by them to mockery and ridicule. What security, indeed, can Christendom expect from this wicked republic, while she is allowed to retain Istria, Croatia, and Dalmatia, the islands of Corfu, Cephalonia, Zante, Candia, and Cyprus?" Such is the confession of the power of Venice, and its influence upon the affairs of Europe, by the most jealous of its antagonists.

One more striking proof of the immensity of her resources remains to be mentioned. During the greater part of the wars which followed the League of Cambray, whilst her enemies could scarcely borrow money at twenty and even thirty per cent., so established was the financial credit of the republic, that her loans were effected at no greater rate of interest than five per cent.

Although the Peace of Cambray left her, after a struggle with Europe, still a giant, the power of Venice was broken. Her exhausted treasury, the destruction of her manufactories, the devastation of her territories, and the general evils of war, might be remedied by the return of peace; but a fearful blow had in the West silently been struck at the interests of her commerce. Her argosies might still penetrate to the innermost harbours of the Mediterranean and Euxine, but Cairo and Alexandria, the emporia of her carrier trade, were no longer supplied by the Moors of Aden and Ormuz with the merchandise of India. Albuquerque and John

di Castro were plundering the shores of the Indian Ocean, from Melinda to Cape Comorin, and diverting to the marts of Portugal every article of merchandise.

The Venetian senate was zealous in providing every remedy for such a state of affairs, which the highest prudence, backed by the warmest patriotism, could suggest. She entered into an alliance with the Sultan, and assisted him in despatching a fleet, built with wood from her own forests, against the Portuguese settlements at the mouth of the Red Sea. When this failed, she tried the arts of diplomacy, but with results equally futile. The Queen of the Adriatic, the mistress of a thousand islands, gradually declined in commerce, in wealth, and in political importance, until her city, her senate, and her power, became but the phantoms of former greatness.

In the baseness of her concluding scenes of decrepitude, she has scarcely found an equal. Discarding all ideas of aggrandizement, Venice in the last days of her independent existence devoted herself to the service of pleasure. She became the Sybaris of modern Europe. Fêtes and carnivals were the sole employment of her citizens, and the professors of religion sanctified by their presence and support the unhallowed orgies of the Ridotto or the Casino. Her highest nobles, in their robes of office, presided at the gaming-table, or under the name of "I Vergognosi," gained a precarious subsistence from professed mendicity. Such was the state of Venice, when the victorious Corsican pronounced

their doom, "votre République a vécu"—Venice—the Venice of history—has ceased to be.

The account of the connection of the Venetians with the India trade, is, with little variation, the history of all the mercantile republics of the Mediterranean. All acquired their importance from the same commerce; all lost it when that commerce was diverted into a new channel. The states which came next to the Venetians, both in political and mercantile importance, and were often their great rivals, were the Genoese and Catalans. Venice chiefly supplied the interior of Germany and the portion of Europe to the north-east of Italy with Oriental goods, imported through Alexandria. Genoa, on the other hand, imported such goods chiefly from Byzantium and Caffa, on the Sea of Azoph (which places they had reached by an overland route), and forwarded them into Britain, and the harbours on the western coast of Europe. The former made Augsburg, where the family of the Fuggers amassed their incredible wealth, the nucleus of her trade; the other frequented, for the most part, the markets of Bruges, and the cities of the Netherlands.

Genoa early established political relations with the court of the Greek emperors, whom her wealth enabled her to treat as equals. The occupation of Pera, a suburb of Constantinople, which she was allowed to fortify, gave her the entire command of that city. She controlled its fisheries and customs; not a bark, without her permission, could navigate its harbour. The cele-

brated Admiral Doria, by his victories over the Venetians and Catalans, for some time gave her the sovereignty of the Mediterranean. Her rich carracks during the middle ages frequented every port in Europe, penetrated into the Baltic, and laid the foundation of the commerce of Lubeck and Rostock. But when the India trade, which was the mainspring of all her mercantile prosperity, fell into the hands of the Portuguese, like her great rival in the Adriatic, she gradually declined, and has finally sunk into mediocrity. She is now but a second-rate port, which owes its consideration not so much to foreign commerce on an extended scale, as to the coast trade of the Mediterranean.

Florence, though situated on the Arno, at a considerable distance from the sea, is supposed to have been directly or indirectly indebted for her prosperity to an Oriental commerce carried on through the port of Pisa. How this could be profitably managed at a town so remote from the sea we cannot learn. Her merchants, however, were noted for their opulence. The riches of the Bardi and the Medici surpass all belief. The wealth of Cosmo de Medici would appear utterly incredible if the monuments of his magnificence did not still remain. Whence it arose is not clearly known. All facts concerning it, do, however, point to the East, and it is supposed that he possessed some channel of Indian commerce, which has become extinct since the discovery of the passage by the Cape. He exercised by his wealth an influence on the fortunes of his country, and even of civilization itself. He lent immense sums to

the public, the repayment of which he never required. His palaces exceeded in magnificence those of any monarch of his time, and were the resort of all the art and intelligence of Italy. By his intercourse with Greece, he was enabled to purchase her literary treasures, and pour into his country the most precious remains of her ancient learning.

It was in Florence that Greek literature was revived. Men of leisure, in affluent circumstances, and especially the youthful members of her nobility, under the guidance of Chrysoloras, the most learned Grecian of the day, studied with assiduity the classical authors. The pure Latinity, and elegant diction of his pupil Aretin, bear witness to the success of his instruction. In those ages the field of science, in which the intellectual faculties could roam and reason, and increase their power by discovery and discussion, was bounded by narrow limits. The revival of the knowledge of antiquity burst that confined circle. It inspired the world, not merely with admiration for the writings of Virgil or Homer, but for the entire frame of ancient society. It made men eager for its institutions and philosophy, and desirous of attaining a refinement, which their own age did not possess. Thus, by the mere circumstance of introducing classical authors into Europe, commerce tended, perhaps more than anything else, to produce its civilization.

Among other towns which derived their importance from their traffic in Indian commodities, were those in the south of France and along the coast of Catalonia.

During the period of its subjection to the Roman power, we gather from many sources that the cities in the south of Gaul were proverbial for their wealth and importance, and the encouragement which they gave to learning. Extensive ruins still attest their former magnificence. From a rescript of Honorius and Theodosius the younger, addressed in A.D. 418 to the prefect of the Gauls, residing at Arles, the object of which was to establish a sort of representative government in the south of France, we learn that it was an Oriental commerce which enriched these cities. "All," says the rescript, "all that the opulent East, all that the perfumed Arabia, the delicate Assyria, the fertile Africa, the beautiful Spain, and the courageous Gaul, produce worthy of note, abound here in such profusion, that all things, admired as magnificent in the different parts of the world, seem the productions of its own climate."

A considerable portion of this trade appears afterwards to have deserted Arles, and the cities at the mouth of the Rhone, and to have showered its golden blessings on Barcelona, and the seaports of Catalonia and Arragon.

The Catalans in the middle ages were noted for their enterprise, and the untiring valour with which they fought for the supremacy of the Mediterranean. Don Pedro of Portugal tells us, that the fame of the Catalonian navy resounded in all lands, and was echoed in all histories: that her naval ordinances spoke of all contingencies that could befall a ship, but never

of retreat, capitulation, or surrender; that five of their ships were always bound to give battle to seven of the enemy, and their generals to die at the foot of the royal oriflamme: that when the fleet was ready for sea, it was a glorious spectacle to behold the king and people assembled on the strand, the three consecrated banners, the king's, the admiral's, and St. George's, brought forth, and the air rent with joyous acclamations, whilst all made sure beforehand of victory and spoil. For an admiral to return unsuccessful was the most dreadful of calamities. Ponsio de Santa Paz, who was conquered in the Bosphorus by the Genoese admiral Doria, died of sheer vexation.

It was her trade with India which encouraged this complete addiction to maritime affairs. Catalan *caravals* and *baloneres* filled the Mediterranean from Barcelona to Alexandria; and even long after the discoveries of Vasco di Gama obtained Indian commodities on terms so reasonable, as to enter into competition even with those brought by the Portuguese by the way of the Cape. As late as the year 1552, we find the general deputation of the country busying themselves to obtain the pope's absolution for all whose business lay with the Mahometans of Egypt,—a thing, which, say they, concerned the interests of very many citizens; thus extensive was their Oriental trade. So wealthy by these means did they grow, that the Catalonians boast that even Charles V. declared, that it was of more moment to him to be "Count of Barcelona" than "Roman Emperor."

From this time, however, the naval prosperity of Catalonia decreased. In consequence with her union with Castile she could no longer indulge in piracy on the shores of Spain. Her commerce with India gradually decreased. Her situation did not render her adapted for the trade from the Atlantic; the ports in Biscay, on the north of Spain, usurped both that and the carrying trade to Flanders. The Turkish corsairs appeared in great force in the Mediterranean, and put an effectual stop to their Eastern voyages. The redoubtable Barbarossa appeared in the very roads of Barcelona. The Oriental trade of the Catalans was stopped; their mercantile affairs fell into a confusion from which they never recovered. The maritime grandeur of the Catalonians is gone.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COMMERCE OF THE PORTUGUESE WITH INDIA.

"Not in vain the distance beacons."—TENNYSON.

FOR many years past few European nations have exhibited less enterprise and energy than the Portuguese. It has not however always been thus. The restless spirit of the Lusitanians of old scarcely yielded to the arms of a Scipio; and under the guidance of their favourite hero Viriathus, they defied for some time the whole power of Rome. When they fell, as fell the rest of the Peninsula, under the dominion of the Moors, in the long struggle which ensued between the warriors of the prophet and the Paladins of Christendom, they fully vindicated their ancient renown. Nowhere did the successors of Tariph feel themselves less secure. Nowhere was the lance of the Christian more often couched in the cause of his faith. Every inch of country was contested; until, at length, the successes of Alfonso the Victorious at Santarem, at Lisbon, at Evora, and finally his grand defeat of the Moorish Emperor of Spain at Campo d' Ourique, expelled the Mahometans from Portugal. Prudent legislation consolidated what the sword had won, and the Constitutions of Lamego confirmed for ever the civil liberties of the Portuguese.

Their martial enterprise next found employment in assisting the Castilians to drive the Mahometans from Spain, and the deeds of their King, Alfonso the Brave, were for ages afterwards a fruitful theme for the minstrels and troubadours of Europe. The power of the Crescent gradually waned. The great victory of Alfonso at Salado, when, as the chroniclers tell us, 60,000 Christians conquered nearly half a million Moors, effectually destroyed the rule of the infidel, and before the end of the fourteenth century, from the north to the south, from the battle field of Fontarabia to the Rock of Gibraltar, not a castle remained in the hands of the Moor. For the next forty years the Portuguese and Castilians turned the arms, which had so long been directed against a common enemy, upon one another. The history of this period is a long catalogue of fierce skirmishes and dreadful sieges. Their issue was the celebrated battle of Aljubarotta (1385), a victory which rendered Portugal for many years independent of, and even superior to, Castile.

Such had been the career of this country up to the end of the fourteenth century. The enterprising spirit of her people, as well as of her monarch, now began to be directed into new channels. A considerable line of sea-board, with several excellent harbours; the possession of a navigable river of considerable size; a long series of maritime victories over the Moors of the north of Africa; these, and many other causes, had fostered the maritime genius of the youth of Portugal. That adventurous spirit, too, which dis-

tinguished all European nations in the middle ages, had, in Southern Europe, been sharpened and improved by several centuries of never-ceasing hostilities against the Moors, and, lastly, by a civil war, arising from a disputed succession. It is such a concurrence of events that has ever called forth those active and daring geniuses, adapted for bold undertakings, who leave the impress of their character upon the policy and sentiments of their countrymen.

Portugal, at the end of the fourteenth century, was full of ardent and ambitious spirits, to whom the situation of their country, hemmed in by a powerful monarchy, with which it was in general on terms of the closest alliance, did not afford free scope. Its institutions were not such as to satisfy the cravings for power and distinction which such men feel. The unexplored ocean, which washed its shores, presented a wider and more lucrative field for enterprise, than a beleaguering of Ceuta, a razzia in Barbary, or a freebooting expedition into the gorges of Atlas.

Geometry, astronomy, and geography, the sciences on which navigation depends, began to be cultivated with activity. The Moorish Jews, who remained and prospered after the Mahometan was driven from the land, were, singular as it may seem, at the head of this revival of literature among the Goths. From the copious writings of Averröes and Avicenna, they became skilled in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In Arabic versions they studied the natural philosophy of the Ionic school, they read the mathematicians of

Alexandria, and, above all, they became acquainted with the geography of Ptolemy. A spirit of inquiry, a desire for the discovery, and for a further knowledge of those countries which he had indistinctly described, animated the learned. The attention of the public was directed to the same end by the partial success which attended an expedition sent by John I. to explore the coast of Africa beyond Cape Non, which had, up to that time, been, as its name imports, the limit of former navigators.

It was at this juncture that Providence raised up Henry, Duke of Vises, fourth son of King John, to represent and embody in his own plans the predominant feelings of his countrymen. In early life he had exhibited many proofs of the valour which in those martial times was supposed to characterize every man of noble birth. In addition to this, he was enlightened beyond the standard of the age in which he lived; was a lover of mathematical science, and especially of those branches of it which are subservient to navigation. He invited the most eminent masters in those studies to superintend the instruction of a number of young men, who were brought up under his own eyes, and in a few years rendered the Portuguese the most scientific navigators in Europe. They no longer crept from cape to cape, but stretched boldly into the ocean, a thousand miles from land, and came upon Madeira, the Cape de Verd islands, and the Azores. The great object of the times was the discovery of a new route to India,—one which would render Oriental commodities

cheaper and more abundant, and direct into another channel that golden stream which had so long enriched the Italian republics. In the hopes of accomplishing this object, Prince Henry made it the business of his whole life to prosecute maritime discovery.

It is not our present object to trace the several steps by which that end was finally attained. Suffice it to say, that as long as he lived he continued to send out ships, commanded by the ablest captains he could find in his own country, or attract by his liberality from others: that each of these commanders went a little beyond his predecessors; that before his death, which occurred in 1443, he had the satisfaction of seeing several colonies established in Africa, and (what in that age was no small matter) nearly 2,000 miles of the coast of that continent thoroughly investigated. Although he never fulfilled the darling object of his life, yet he gave that impulse to discovery, which led to its accomplishment; and by the encouragement which he bestowed on nautical affairs, laid the foundation of the commercial grandeur of his country.

We must not here omit to mention another event, which afterwards materially affected the durability of the Portuguese commercial power. To put to silence the opposition of those who looked upon his projects as fruitless and chimerical, and at the same time to invest his plans with the respect which at all times attaches itself to religion, Henry sought the sanction of the Pope. He represented the indefatigable energy with which he had applied himself to the discovery of unknown

lands; the efforts he had made to bring into the bosom of the true church their miserable inhabitants, who were either living in heathenism, or professors of the religion of Mahomet; and he besought him to prohibit, under the severest penalties, the rest of the Christian powers from molesting Portugal, whilst employed in this holy undertaking. He promised that the great end of all their expeditions should be the propagation of the Christian faith, and the establishment of the Papal power. Eugene IV., the pontiff to whom he applied, issued a bull applauding the late efforts of the Portuguese, and granting them an exclusive right to all the regions, which they should discover from Cape Non to the continent of India.

This extravagant donation turned the eyes of Europe to the operations of the Portuguese. The spirit of discovery and zeal for religion became synonymous. That enthusiasm which first planned, and the ardour which ultimately, in spite of every difficulty, accomplished the Crusades, was directed into this new channel. Portugal suddenly became the resort of all the bold and talented of Europe, who were inflamed with those romantic and ambitious feelings, which in past times would have made them knights errant, or soldiers of the cross. Lisbon threw off its Moorish languor; its quays were thronged with Catalans and Florentines, Venetians and Genoese, the first sailors of the age. Although men whose ideas had hitherto been circumscribed by the shores of the Mediterranean, they now burned with ardour to join in the lottery of fame, which

Prince Henry had opened. Companies were formed for the discovery of new lands, and under the Portuguese flag every year found numerous vessels embarked in this novel pursuit.

After the death of Prince Henry, royal encouragement was but charily granted. Private enterprise, however, supplied its place. Alfonso, who occupied the throne, was sufficiently engaged in his Moorish and Castilian wars. John II., the monarch who succeeded him, entered with ardour into the schemes, which Prince Henry had contemplated. A well-planned system of commercial policy was formed with reference to his new possessions. The colonies on the coast of Africa added materially to the prosperity, and, in consequence, to the revenue of the country. Every fresh discovery gave a fresh stimulus to its trade. Under his active encouragement and patronage expeditions on a more extended scale were undertaken.

In 1486, Bartholomew Diaz, driven by a hurricane past the southern point of Africa, which, in consequence, he named the Cape of Storms, reported on his return that beyond that point the coast appeared to trend northwards. Henry compared this with information which he had received from Payva and Covillam, two Portuguese whom he had sent into the East to discover the residence of Prester John,* and one of whom had

* It was commonly reported in Europe during the Middle Ages, that there was in the distant East a powerful monarch who had received, not only baptism, but ordination from Christian missionaries. The abode of this extraordinary personage was assigned by some to the happy valleys of Abyssinia, by others to the boundless plains of

penetrated to Calicut and other ports on the Coast of Malabar, and felt sure of finding that passage to India,

Tartary. The origin of the former idea is due to the existence of a Christian church in Abyssinia from the earliest ages. The latter originated from the Nestorians. These religionists, anathematized at the Council of Ephesus, and afterwards persecuted by Theodosius the Younger, fled in large numbers from the Roman Empire, and took refuge in that of Persia in the furthest regions of India and the East, and among the wandering tribes of Central Asia. Their missionaries insinuated themselves into the camps of the Mongols, and "a khan, whose power they vainly magnified, is the prototype of Prester, or Presbyter John, *i. e.*, John the Priest, who so long amused the credulity of Europe." He is said to have despatched an embassy to the Nestorian Patriarch, or as he is usually called, the Elijah of Mosul, to inquire how in the season of Lent he should abstain from animal food, and how he might celebrate the Eucharist in a region that produced neither corn nor wine. "In its long progress to Mosul, Jerusalem and Rome, the story evaporated into a monstrous fable, of which some features have been borrowed from the Lama of Thibet." So says Gibbon. The recent discoveries of MM. Huc and Gabet in Thibet would lead us to suppose that the Buddhist religion itself, with its monasteries and similar institutions, may possibly be the remains of this ancient Christianity. The Nestorians, who fled to India, and who appear to have produced many enterprising merchants, entered China at Canton, by sea. Their missionaries propagated Christianity with considerable success, until they awakened the jealousy of the state, and the foreign sect is supposed to have expired in ignorance and oblivion. Asmanni (Biblioth. Orient. iv., p. 468, *et seq.*) has proved, by the consent of Chinese, Arabian, Syriac, and Latin evidence, that Christianity existed in China between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. It is a question whether it will not ultimately be found, that the flame of religious enthusiasm, which is at the present moment blazing up into a political revolution, may not have originally shot forth from some long smouldering embers of Nestorianism. The rebels are said to make strange distinctions between the mortal and spiritual nature of their chief which have not as yet been well understood. The Nestorians nicely discriminated between the humanity of Christ and the divinity of Jesus. The rebels wage a crusade against every form of idolatry. The characteristic of the Nestorians, and that which chiefly brought them into collision with their fellow-Christians, was their aversion to the Virgin Mary being styled, "the mother of God."

which had been the darling wish of the princes of Portugal for the last eighty years.

The indistinct account which ancient authors gave of the southern coast of Africa—the reported circumnavigation of that continent by the Egyptians, in the reign of Pharaoh Necho—by Heraclides, by order of Darius Hystaspes—by Eudoxus of Cyzicum, in the reign of Ptolemy Evergetes—and, lastly, the Periplus of Hanno—attracted attention, and began to be considered no longer mere fables of antiquity. These and the more recent accounts were compared, and John, in the full confidence of success, gave the Cabo Tormentoso of Diaz the more auspicious name of "Capo de Bona Esperança," or the Cape of Good Hope, a name which has ever since been retained. He was already fitting out an expedition for further search, in fancy enjoying the opulence of the East, and diverting its commerce from the lagunes of Venice to the banks of the Tagus, when the discovery of America by Columbus overwhelmed Europe with astonishment.

In Portugal a general emulation arose to surpass the performances of the Spaniards. Expeditions on a larger scale were projected. Manuel, the successor of John II., inherited his genius as well as his throne; and, in 1497, despatched four ships from the Tagus, under the command of Vasco di Gama. The united tonnage of these vessels—(the largest being a victualler, which was destroyed as soon as her stores were exhausted)—was 470. After encountering a succession of storms and calms, and all the dreaded dangers of the Atlantic, Gama ultimately doubled the Cape and reached Melinda,

a town on the eastern coast of Africa, belonging to Mahometans, and described as a handsome city, full of houses built of stone, and in a style of considerable magnificence. The country in the vicinity was pleasant and fertile, and the inhabitants a civilized people, enriched by commerce with the coast of India. They were especially on friendly terms with the merchants of Malabar, and the Nestorian Christians of St. Thomas frequented their harbours. At the time of Di Gama's visit, there were at Melinda no less than four vessels, commanded by Christians, and from them he obtained a variety of useful information relative to the trade of India. Lastly, he was conducted by a native Mahometan pilot *across* the Indian Ocean to Calicut, the most important town of Malabar.

Let the reader consider what was the character and extent of the native commerce of India, as we have described it from the obscure narratives of Pliny, Arrian, and Cosmas, and he will form some conception of the scene presented to the Portuguese. They found Calicut the focus of a thriving traffic, and visited by vessels from every port on the Indian Ocean, which changed their cargoes for the productions of the Eastern Archipelago and of China. These had come, as of yore, in huge junks, in the construction of which, as Pliny had remarked, little or no iron was used. The description of the state of native commerce, as given by the writers of this age, tally so exactly with the relations of ancient authors, that we can scarcely credit the fact that they are separated by an interval of nearly

one thousand years. The trade, as in olden times, was not in the hands of the natives, but conducted by Moors, *i. e.*, by the inhabitants of the coasts of Arabia and the Persian Gulf, who were the descendants of the Hamyarites and the Tyrians. To this, however, there was one exception, for the inhabitants of Guzerat still maintained their maritime renown, and one of the most important merchants of Calicut was a native of that peninsula.

The Mahometans appear to have quickly discovered the pernicious influence which the new route of the Portuguese was likely to exert upon their commerce. During the short time that Gama remained at Calicut, they persecuted him with the most unrelenting malice. By their means he was more than once at open hostility with the Zamorin, or ruler of the country. By the superiority however of his ships, and the valour of his men, he defeated every open attempt which they made, but was prevented by their secret machinations from obtaining a cargo. He sailed homewards, and on the 14th September, 1499, landed at Lisbon. As some compensation for his disappointment in returning without merchandise, he brought intelligence which conferred on his monarch the commerce of the East, and all its dependent branches, and rendered his country the first maritime power in the world.

Manuel, aware that nothing but superior force could guard his subjects from the enmity of the Moors, immediately fitted out for the next expedition an armed force of thirteen ships and 1,500 men, under the

command of Alvarez de Cabral, who was driven by a storm on the coast of Brazil, of which he was probably the first discoverer. Thus, with the aid of a powerful fleet, did the Portuguese begin their Oriental commerce in that domineering spirit which overawed the feeble mind of the Asiatic, which rapidly made them dominant in the East, but at the same time rendered them hated and detested, and their power uncertain. Their possessions and their commerce were like a mighty pyramid poised on its vertex; the least misfortune threatened its equilibrium.

Fleet after fleet in quick succession left the Tagus, and, hoisting the colours of Portugal, became the pirates of the Indian Ocean. Foremost among these, we regret to say, was the great Di Gama himself. After being by a papal bull decorated with the pompous title of "Lord of the navigation, conquests and trade of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India," he again in 1502 doubled the Cape, with a squadron however, not of three, but of twenty, well-equipped vessels. In prosecution of the ambitious views of the court of Lisbon, he ranged along the whole of the western coast of Africa, and compelled the Mahometan princes to avow themselves the tributaries of Portugal. He scoured the southern coast of Asia from the Red Sea to Malabar, and everywhere sought out and destroyed the factories of the Arabs. At Calicut he took a sanguinary revenge upon those who had opposed him in his former voyage. Thence he proceeded to the neighbouring town of Cochin, filled his vessels with rich cargoes,

and, laden with merchandise and plunder, returned to Europe.

The succeeding Portuguese commanders acted as though the bull of Eugene IV. had granted them license to commit every crime, and break every obligation contracted with men who were not Christians. Their atrocities against the Mahometans at length roused the indignation of the Sultan of Egypt, to whom they nominally owed allegiance. He sent an imperious message to the Pope and the King of Portugal, requiring them to command all Christians to abstain from navigating or trading in the Indian Sea, and threatening, in case of refusal, to put to death all the Christians in his dominions, destroy their churches, and demolish the Holy Sepulchre itself. These dreadful menaces, however, availed nothing. The Sultan prepared for war, and, what in that age appeared prodigious impiety, the Christian republic of Venice became his staunchest ally!

The diminution in freight by the new conveyance round the Cape was so immense, that Indian commodities were to be obtained best and cheapest in Lisbon, and the towns with which she was in communication. The growing power of the Portuguese in the East rendered the supply of such articles by the ancient route, as precarious as it was expensive; and the transport trade of Alexandria, and the carrying trade of Venice were alike injured. Regardless of the censures of the Church, and the indignation of Christendom, the Venetians entered into the closest alliance with the

Sultan, supplied him with timber for ship-building from their forests in Dalmatia, assisted in conveying it and other necessary stores to Alexandria, thence up the Nile to Cairo, and across the desert to Suez. There a fleet was equipped by Venetian carpenters, and, under the united colours of the Sultan and the Lion of St. Mark, encountered the Portuguese in the Indian Sea. The total destruction, in 1508, of the combined squadron, the forlorn hope of Venetian commerce, gratified the superstition of the age; and the pious, in the subsequent decay of the republic, beheld an outraged Deity, exacting punishment for its ungodly alliance with unbelievers.

In 1506, the celebrated Albuquerque was appointed governor of the Indies, and harried the coast of Asia from Melinda to Calicut. Aden alone resisted his attacks and maintained its independence, whilst Ormuz was taken, and its monarch declared a vassal of Portugal. Portuguese forts and custom-houses were erected at the mouths of the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Bab-el-mandeb, and all the trade of India flowed through their hands. Goa, Calicut, Malacca, the key to the navigation of the Pacific, and the grand emporium for the trade of the Eastern Archipelago, were seized and fortified. Ceylon, Cochin China, and even China itself, were penetrated within thirty years after the voyage of Di Gama, and their wealth, in the form of merchandise or plunder, flowed into the treasury of Portugal.

It was under Albuquerque that her Oriental power

attained a settled form. That general consolidated his victories by a firm and vigorous administration. Although as a warrior, and in the prevailing spirit of the age, he esteemed commerce less noble than conquest, he did not neglect it. He had the enlightenment to perceive that small duties give greater encouragement to trade and are more profitable than large ones, and in accordance with this principle, he lowered the duties in all the Portuguese settlements. He sent embassies to the neighbouring princes: he invited them to commercial intercourse: he conciliated the good-will of the natives by repressing the piracies of European traders, and many of the native Indian princes were better content to have the Portuguese, as governed by him, for their neighbours, than the Moors whom he had expelled. To this period, but to no other, is the lofty language of their historian, Faria y Sousa, applicable. "The trophies," says he, "of our victories are not bruised helmets and warlike engines hung on the trees of the mountains, but cities, islands, and kingdoms, first humbled under our feet, and then joyfully worshipping our government." So dominant, too, were they at this period, that neither Moors nor Hindoos were permitted to navigate the Indian Ocean without a passport, and were prohibited from trading in iron, steel, lead, ginger, and cinnamon of Ceylon.

Let us now follow the course of their commerce. Ships, for that age, of huge tonnage annually collected the merchandize which had been acquired at the several factories, doubled the Cape, and sailed for Lisbon

Arrived thither, their cargoes were distributed to the different countries of the north of Europe, chiefly by vessels from the Netherlands, and their India goods were sold at a price vastly inferior to those that came overland by Ormuz, or through Egypt by Aden. Owing to their long-established agencies, and their greater proximity to the markets both of India and Europe, the merchants of Venice still for the most part supplied the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean. They were, however, quickly expelled from the import towns of Germany and the Netherlands. The trade and the wealth which had once passed into Bruges began now to be concentrated in Antwerp, and found its way into the interior of Europe more directly by the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Scheld. Although the Fuggers[1] and Velsares of Augsburg, and possibly other merchants, might occasionally purchase permission to trade to India on their own account, yet the old cities on the Danube and its tributaries were no longer marts for Eastern commodities.

Promising, however, as the Portuguese Indian trade had hitherto been, and much as it had given an impulse to the civilization and prosperity of that kingdom, there existed in it an erroneous commercial principle, which began soon to work its ruin. Instead of committing

[1] According to Linschoten, a Dutchman, who sailed to India in 1583 in a Portuguese vessel, and has left an account of his voyage and the proceedings of the Portuguese in the East, these two firms, the former the Rothschilds, and the latter the Barings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, imported pepper under the management of their own factors, to whom the King of Portugal assigned cabins and provisions in his own ships.

the trade of his Indian empire to the enterprise of private individuals or private companies, the Portuguese monarch retained everything in his own possession. The compulsive traffic which was carried on by the terror of his cannon, was the entire and sole property of the king. The writers of that age speak of everything connected with the trade as belonging to the king. It is the *king's* commerce, the *king's* merchandise, the *king's* factors. All were the *king's* ships, officered by the admiralty, and laden by the *king's* stevadores; whilst every article was registered in the *king's* books.[1]

It fared with this as with every other royal monopoly. The heavy expenses of arming and manning the ships in a warlike manner—the frequent losses by storms, by mismanagement, by the frauds to which the royal monopoly was doubtless often exposed—all fell upon the king. The profits, which at first were enormous—so much cheaper was the freight of merchandise by the new than the old route—were quickly reduced by these means, and by the traffic which interlopers were constantly undertaking.

It was soon found necessary to grant licenses to different mercantile houses, and the trade was carried on at less expense by the better management of private individuals, than by a cumbrous system of government offices and departments, which but too often acted in

[1] That the East India trade was a royal monopoly in Portugal is attested by Linschoten and all the native writers. Smith, in his Wealth of Nations, has fallen into several mistakes from being ignorant of this fact.

opposition to one another, and to the prejudice of their royal master. The trade, too, from port to port in India, although it nominally belonged to the king, was in the hands of private persons, and was found so lucrative that the different departments of government were constantly deserted for it, so that soon after its commencement the profits of conducting this royal military commerce of the East fell below the expenses.

The wealth at first obtained from this trade by the monarchs of Portugal, although considerable, redounded but little to her advantage. Manuel, surnamed "the Great and the Glorious," employed it in expeditions against Barbary. The constant wars of Charles V. of Spain, the religious affairs of India, and Jesuit missions, sufficiently exercised the attention of John the Pious. To his magnanimous and warlike successor, Sebastian, surnamed "the Regretted," was reserved the unenviable office of ruining his country.

The successes of the Portuguese in India—the golden prospects which were there opened out—and the settlement at Bahia in the Brazils—had carried all the youth and energy of the country beyond the seas. Portugal was like a man who had been over-exerting himself: rest was become essential to her prosperity. Rest at this time might have enabled her to keep that high position among the powers of Europe to which she was rapidly approaching. But rest was the very thing which Sebastian hated. His mind was full of the wildest schemes. He formed a plan for subduing the whole of the North of Africa, and taking even Constan-

tinople itself. In 1578, he inconsiderately rushed into war with Muley, the king of the Moors; landed in Africa, and at the bloody battle of Alcaçar Segeur, in which he was either killed, or at any rate disappeared, irrecoverably weakened the power of Portugal.[1]

Hereafter, her Indian possessions were such a continual drain upon her population, as was hardly compensated by the advantages which accrued from Lisbon's being the European emporium for the merchandise of India; she had, too, no manufactures, little or nothing to barter with the merchants who frequented her ports; and the costly commodities of India were exchanged for cloths of England and Flanders; for the manufactures of Venice and Genoa, the majority of which were conveyed to India, and brought but little profit to the people, among whom the interchange took place. Oporto and Coimbra, but especially Lisbon, became, it is true, the abode of opulent merchants; were adorned with goodly streets and noble mansions; but the stream of wealth which flowed through them, was but little

[1] The fate of this unhappy prince is enveloped in mystery. After the battle, in which all the Portuguese, with the exception of fifty, are said to have fallen; a dead body, completely disfigured with wounds, but said to be the king's, was sent to Portugal. It is now, however, generally supposed that he escaped, and reappeared in Venice in 1598, was afterwards committed to the galleys, and finally murdered at Palermo by order of his cousin, Philip of Spain, who had usurped his throne. Whilst in Venice several Portuguese recognised his features; he mentioned to persons, who had been ambassador to him from the Republic, circumstances only known to himself and them; and, lastly, one of his arms was longer than the other, a mark impossible to be counterfeited. See Swinburne's Travels in the Two Sicilies, i. 328.

diverted into domestic channels, and never penetrated into the interior of the country. There arose not around them, as there did around Venice, thriving manufactories, which spread the riches derived from foreign lands throughout the whole country. The inland towns were little affected by the magnificent business which was being transacted on the coast; whilst, allured by the prospect of gain, their youth left them for ever to seek their fortunes beyond the Cape. So that Portugal not only gained no new capital, but also lost a considerable portion of her population. Her India trade, which held out such promise of prosperity, appears to have affected her position but little; and, if it did not ultimately cripple her resources, it was at any rate completely unproductive of any permanent national prosperity.

To return to India. The governors who succeeded the valiant Albuquerque, endeavoured to atone for the inferiority of their talents by cruelty and insatiable avarice. They quarrelled with each other, defrauded their monarch, were partners in every act of piracy, and, by their atrocities, drove the natives to desperation. To remedy these disorders, Di Gama was again, for the third time, dispatched to India, where, after a brief administration, he died in 1524. His successor, Nunio de Cunha, reconstructed the Portuguese empire, defeated a vast armament equipped by Selim, the Turkish emperor, for the express purpose of driving Europeans from the Indian Seas, and conferred tranquillity and prosperity upon the regions over which he

held sway. Of the governors who followed, John di Castro, to whom we owe the introduction of the orange tree into Europe,[1] appears to have been the only individual who thoroughly comprehended the position of his countrymen in India. To considerable military success he added a zeal for civil reforms. He gained several victories over the Moorish princes of India, and "in order," as he says, "to prevent the ruin of the state, he prohibited the soldiers from becoming merchants," Death however interrupted his plans. The events of many succeeding years are a tedious recital of petty warfare, piracy, rapacity, cruelty and injustice, which ultimately provoked even the timid Hindoo. A confederacy of the maritime states throughout the whole of the East was formed for the expulsion of the Portuguese. But the valour of Asia has rarely encountered with success the persevering bravery of Europe. A series of defeats thwarted the plans of the natives, and only riveted more firmly the fetters of a hopeless subjection.

Portugal, to her honour be it spoken, was not forgetful of that promise which she had made to Pope Eugenius, that the extension of Christianity should go hand in hand with the extension of her commerce and dominions. John the Pious, learning how infamously his subjects in the East were living, indulging all their vilest passions without bestowing one thought on God, sent Francis Xavier thither at the head of a

[1] He planted these on his lands of Cintra, whence they have spread over the whole of the south of Europe.

Jesuit mission. Xavier was a man animated with the most ardent zeal for the conversion of the heathen. He compelled the Portuguese to cease from their vile habits of life. He preached the Gospel in places to which even their commerce had never penetrated.

Goa was the head of the Indian missions, and soon grew into a city of churches and monasteries. The Inquisition was established, and the Christians of St. Thomas, the Nestorians of Malabar, true to the opinions of their founder, refused to bow to the crucifix, or invoke the Virgin, by what they deemed the heathenish title of "mother of God;" and were made amenable to the tortures of the Holy Office. These hapless religionists, who had fled into the furthest East from the anathemas of the Council of Ephesus, and the persecutions of Theodosius the Younger, barely escaped extermination from the *auto-da-fés* of Goa. From Goa too, as their head-quarters, issued the Jesuits, and assimilating the religion of Jesus to Brahminism or Buddhism,[1] as the case might require, made myriads of converts. Worshippers of the crucifix, adorers of the Virgin and child, were to be found throughout the whole of India and the adjacent islands, and even at Pekin and Jeddo, the capitals of China and Japan. Thus, to the support of the

[1] For account of this see Trench's Hulsean Lectures for 1846, p. 7; and Van Bohlen's Alte Indien, i. 136, for the history of the Veda, which they forged, for the purpose of facilitating the introduction of Christianity. It afterwards fell into the hands of Voltaire, who, under the idea that it was genuine, eagerly used it to depreciate the Scriptures, by showing how many of their doctrines had been anticipated by the wisdom of the East!

Portuguese commercial interest was added the indirect authority of religion, the very thing, we may remark, of which it was especially in want. It was now in its heyday. Henceforth it began to decline.

As yet, the Portuguese possessions had been governed by one man, styled the Viceroy of India. If he was active, enterprising, and enlightened, such as Albuquerque or Nunio de Cunha, all was well. The supreme power being in the hand of a single individual, could immediately be brought to bear upon any point at which it was required, and the greatest benefits were the result. Nothing produces a more marked effect upon the mind of the Asiatic than power quickly applied. Swiftness in planning and rapidity in action completely overawe him, whilst the least vacillation allows him time to collect his energies, and apply his powers, which are often much more important than they seem. So that ill-concerted plans, if only immediately carried into effect, have often been found in India more beneficial to European interests, than well-advised schemes, tardily executed.

Neglectful of this grand principle in dealing with Eastern nations, the ministers of King Sebastian thought proper to divide the government into three parts. The unity of councils and operations, so essentially necessary in territories far removed from the seat of supreme government—the power of acting at once and with energy, was thus rendered impossible. These measures were followed by their natural consequences. The Moors and Hindoos began to make

head against those, who had ruined their commerce and insulted their religion. The Portuguese were expelled by the King of Ternate from the Molucca Islands: their settlements in Ceylon were lost, and Malacca was invested by powerful armies. The squadrons of the Malays, now more expert in naval warfare than formerly, hovered over every coast, and it grew to be no unusual thing for Portuguese ships to be defeated by country cruisers. It was at this juncture that another European nation made its appearance in India, and transferred the direct trade from that country to another European emporium.

Scarcely two years had elapsed after the disastrous battle of Alcaçar Seguer, and the disappearance of the headstrong Sebastian, than Philip II. king of Spain, on the death of Cardinal Henry, the last male of the royal family, seized on the kingdom of Portugal, which he claimed in right of his mother Isabella, the daughter of King Manuel. He soon discovered that the revenue, which ought to have arisen from his dominions and commerce in the East, was annihilated by the frauds of the agents employed; that in fact they did not produce a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of their management. He despised the trade of India in comparison with that of America, which annually sent its rich *galleons*, and, in A. D. 1587, gladly made over to a private company the exclusive privilege of trading to India, in consideration of a certain sum to be paid annually.

Affairs, however, had taken such a turn that the

company could not prosper, and they soon became unable to make the stipulated payments. The King of Spain, annoyed at seeing himself impoverished, instead of enriched, by his Eastern dominions, put the finishing blow to his influence in India by sending an order to Averedo, the Viceroy, to make the Government support itself by selling every office to the highest bidder.

Every Government *employé*, from the Viceroy downwards, now devoted his whole attention to the accumulation of wealth by means the most unscrupulous. Every commander of a fort became an independent robber; every captain of a vessel an independent pirate. Anarchy and confusion reigned everywhere: insurrections and rebellions broke out on every side, and the Portuguese power would soon have failed from its innate rottenness, even though no other Europeans had found their way into India to accelerate its ruin. So fearful was the misrule of that age, that the Portuguese character received blemishes from which it never afterwards recovered, and became, in the East, what it now remains, a by-word for all that is mean, despicable, and dishonourable.

The Dutch, whilst Portugal was a separate kingdom, had purchased at Lisbon their India goods, and had thence supplied all the nations of northern Europe. Philip II., the gloomy and bigoted successor of Charles V., who, on the score of religion, harassed them with a war, the sanguinary cruelties of which are but too well known, soon perceived that their powers of opposition were

proportioned to the success of their commerce. By ruining one of its most lucrative branches, he resolved to cripple their resources. With this object, he seized upon those vessels of the republic which were in Lisbon, and forbade the Portuguese any longer to hold commercial intercourse with them.

The consequences of this policy were such as its blindness and short-sightedness well justified. Deprived of the supply of Indian goods at Lisbon, they resolved to seek them at the fountain-head. In 1595 they sent four ships to Bantam. Hostilities against the Portuguese were immediately commenced, and within forty years from that date, the whole power of that people was broken.

The appearance of the English in the Indian Ocean, and the deep hatred of the natives, which was the offspring of a hundred years of oppression, rapidly facilitated their fall. The Dutch blockaded the Tagus, prevented any assistance from being dispatched from Lisbon, and seized their homeward-bound vessels. The Mahometan princes harassed them with perpetual hostilities: in a few years their power was effectually broken: and the Dutch supplanted them even in their trade with China and Japan. In 1656 a last and gallant stand was made at Colombo in Ceylon, which was invested by the Dutch with a large naval force. After sustaining a terrific siege of seven months, Colombo fell, and with it the princely dominion of the Portuguese in India.

Their total expulsion from the East was henceforth

only prevented by their utter political insignificancy. With the exception of Goa, and a few factories in the Gulf of Cambay and on the eastern coast of Africa, the whole of their Oriental possessions have vanished. So inconsiderable is their trade with India at the present moment, that their country and colonies are now supplied with Indian produce by British merchants. The light fabrics of Bengal, the fine muslins of Dacca, and the shawls and thin woollen fabrics of Lahore, are as well adapted to the climate of the Brazils as to that of Hindostan. A great demand for them has consequently arisen in that colony, but it has produced little or no effect on the trade of the Portuguese settlements. Nearly the whole of such goods pass through the hands of the merchants of Calcutta: their transmission is effected by British capital, and in British vessels.

The Portuguese, in the government of their Eastern possessions, appear to have proposed to themselves the Romans as a model for their imitation. In fact, so far did they ape the customs of that nation, that John di Castro revived the parade of their triumphs; and the generals and soldiers, whom he had captured, were led in chains behind his triumphal car through the streets of Goa. Like that warlike nation, they looked upon commerce as unimportant in comparison with dominion. Their rapacious military spirit induced them to prefer a revenue, extorted by violence and secured by the superiority of power, to the more lasting benefits which accrue from the mutually beneficent exchanges of commerce. They never fully perceived that such a system

contained the elements of its own destruction, until their power was annihilated.

The period during which they held sole possession of the trade with India, is pretty nearly conterminous with the 16th century. Within a few years after the discovery of the Cape, nearly the whole of the Indian commodities used in Europe passed through their hands, so that the statistics of their monopoly, are those of the India trade itself. During the first 50 years, the average number of homeward-bound vessels which annually arrived at Lisbon, was not more than *five*, and for the remaining period a little more than *three!* So trifling was the whole consumption of Indian goods throughout Europe during this century. The extravagant demand for Indian spices, which were required under the Roman empire for the services of religion, and the funerals of the wealthy, no longer existed, and it was not until the Dutch and English engaged in the trade, and imported articles of necessity rather than of luxury, such as calicoes, raw cotton, rice, silk, and the like, that the consumption of India goods in Europe again attained any considerable magnitude. The domineering spirit too of the Portuguese, which induced them to prefer conquest to commerce, further diminished the imports of Indian commodities, by rendering the arrival of their vessels uncertain and irregular, so that occasionally for several years no vessels were despatched from the East, and the taste for Oriental produce was allowed to expire.

With regard to their outward-bound vessels, Faria

the historian of Portuguese Asia, has furnished us with some singular particulars. There was a perfect rage for emigration, and for building large vessels, which was attended with frightful loss of life. Of 956[1] vessels which sailed to India in 18 years, he calculates that 150 were lost, and that the mortality by shipwreck and disease during the same period was 100,000. A destruction of life and property, which, after deduction for ignorance of currents, winds and seasons, gives us but a very indifferent idea of Portuguese seamanship. In explanation of this it may be remarked, that a few expeditions robbed the country of all her experienced mariners; that vessels were built in burden varying from 1,000 to 2,000 tons,[2] and manned by seamen, four-fifths of whom knew little or nothing of their duty, whilst the remainder had never navigated a vessel larger than the feluccas of the Mediterranean; that between eight and nine hundred men were embarked in such ships, badly ventilated and injudiciously provisioned, and lastly, that the vessels themselves were generally overloaded, lumbered, and top-heavy.[3] These are sufficient reasons for the terrible disasters to which this early navigation was subject. The profitable manner in which vessels could be employed in the native trade in India, or in piracy, and the small number of Portu-

[1] This gives an annual average of fifty-three, an enormous number for the sixteenth century.

[2] Linschoten mentions one of 1,600 tons. In 1604 the Dutch took a Portuguese carrack of 1,400 tons on her passage from Macao, with 700 men and 100 women on board. See Macpherson's Commerce of India, p. 32.

[3] Linschoten asserts this from personal observation.

guese who returned to their country, will account for the difference between the number of those which sailed for, and those which returned from, the East. With an allowance for unnecessary shipwrecks from the causes above assigned, and for loss by piracy and war with the natives, probably it does not much exceed the number which now double the Horn, and are absorbed in the country trade of the Pacific, and the Eastern Archipelago.

In recapitulation, we may remark that the effects of its Indian commerce upon Portugal were as follows. First—the preparations of Don Henry, and the expeditions which led the way for the discovery of the route to India by the Cape, drew the attention of mankind upon the efforts of the Portuguese, allured into their country all the most intrepid and enterprising of the age, and gave an impulse to every sterling feature of their character. Their first efforts in a commerce which was then novel and unique, their bold voyages out into the mid-ocean, and the wealth which flowed into the country, was giving them a hi h standing among the powers of Europe. Little or none of the capital, however, employed in the Indian trade was retained by manufactures, or other means, for the permanent aggrandizement of their country, or the development of its resources. It suffered at the same time by the incessant drain which was made upon it by its colonies and distant conquests. Like an overloaded animal, it sank beneath such burdens; its Eastern commerce did, it is true, ennoble Lisbon, but its princely

profits were reaped by the merchants of Antwerp and the Netherlands. In consequence of these and other causes, to be found in its unfortunate connection with the crown of Castile, which was so often the means of deluging its plains with blood, Portugal never fully realised those grand promises of commercial prosperity which were held out by the discoveries of Di Gama. It was reserved for the Dutch, and lastly for the English, to grow rich in that bright field of trade, which it was her privilege to open out. It was reserved for *them* to enjoy that lucrative commerce, which *she* had wrenched from the merchants of Venice and Genoa.

CHAPTER X.

THE COMMERCE OF THE DUTCH WITH INDIA.

"Qui mare tenet, eum necesse est rerum potiri."—*Cicero.*

We have already briefly noticed the means by which the India trade was transferred from Lisbon to the cities of the Netherlands. We have now to trace its effects among a people whose national character is as different from that of the Portuguese as can well be imagined. Both nations, however, possessed commercial enterprise, but in each it sprang from different causes. In the Lusitanian, it was the offspring of that restless and fiery spirit which burns within the soul of the dark-eyed children of Southern Europe. In the Batavian, it arose from a cold phlegmatic contemplation of the advantages to be derived from the possession of money, and often was the result of the most sordid avarice.

Before Lisbon had attained any commercial importance, the inhabitants of the Netherlands were distinguished for their proficiency in fisheries and manufactures. These two branches of industry became the foundation of a carrying trade, which vied in extent with that of Venice and Genoa. Their country became the grand *entrepôt* between Northern and Southern Europe. There the commodities of the Mediterranean

and the Euxine were exchanged for the productions of the Baltic, and the fabrics of England and Normandy. Their cities became wealthy and prosperous. Enlightenment, civilization, and refinement were the natural consequence. Lille, Mons, Namur, Liège, Ghent, Cleves, but especially Bruges, held in Northern Europe the same position, and performed the same political functions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that the republics of Italy did in the thirteenth and fourteenth.

Bruges, beyond all others, was the Venice of the North. Her magistrates entertained the neighbouring princes and monarchs. Her daughters, in the splendour of their attire and beauty, surpassed all the titled dames of Europe. There is a well-known tale of Joanna of Navarre, the wife of Philip le Bel, King of France, being so mortified at the splendid appearance of the citizens' wives, as to exclaim, "I thought that I had been the only queen here, but I find there are many hundreds more."[1]

Bruges had been chosen by the Venetians as the mart for their goods in the west of Europe, as Augsburg had been for the interior. For some time after the Indian trade had deserted its ancient channels, Bruges still retained its importance. The discovery of the passage by the Cape appears to have so much increased the commerce of Europe, that a more ready communication with the interior of Germany than was furnished by a canal meeting the Scheldt at Ghent became necessary.

[1] Robertson's India, Appendix, p. 49.

In 1515, the English selected Antwerp, as a more advantageous basis for mercantile operations. They were followed thither by most of the merchants of other countries. It was presently made the staple for the Hanseatic league, and thenceforth became the chief seat of the trade of the Western world. Thither came the merchandise of India, almost entirely through Lisbon, and thither flocked merchants from every country in Europe. In general these, it is true, transacted their own business, but a considerable trade fell into the hands of the Netherlanders, and vast sums of money remained in their country.

It resulted from this wealth, and their intercourse with a variety of nations, that their minds were enlightened and expanded, and they were among the first to perceive the absurdities of the Roman Catholic faith. They were in the height of their prosperity—the brightest jewel in the crown of Spain—when the intolerant bigotry of their monarch brought ruin upon everything.

It is not our business to dwell upon the unrelenting cruelty of Philip the Second, or the atrocities of the Duke of Alva. One fact shall suffice. An author of repute, no other than Grotius, asserts that before the people rose against their oppressors, a hundred thousand had been judicially slaughtered; the men by fire and sword, the women by being buried alive. The cities of Flanders saw and endured horrors which are beyond description — beyond belief. Persecution has never

[1] Annal. Belg. pp. 15-17.

produced the effect which was contemplated. Instead of *suppressing*, it *disseminates* a religion. It begins with the specious object of producing tranquillity and prosperity, it ends by becoming the instrument of destruction and depopulation. The blind and narrow policy of Philip drove the wealth of the Low Countries to a land where its possessors could enjoy their religious and civil liberty. Many of the Walloons, or inhabitants of Southern Flanders, found security in England, and gave a stimulus to our woollen manufactures, which ultimately placed them in the position which they now occupy. Whilst the *gueux*, or beggars, as the Flemish sea-adventurers were called, driven from their own harbours, sought shelter in the ports of Britain, and were permitted by Elizabeth there to dispose of their pillage or merchandise.

In 1576 Antwerp—the opulent and enterprising Antwerp—was sacked in the most terrible manner by its Spanish garrison, whom arrears of pay had driven into mutiny. A like misfortune, which threatened the neighbouring cities, and the mercantile depression, produced by the sudden rin of so many of the wealthiest merchants of the Neherlnds, roused not only Holland and Zealand, but the whole of the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries, still smarting from the cruelties of Alva, into open rebellion. After two years of various success, the seven provinces north of the Rhine, in which the Potestant interest predominated, at the union of Utrecht, were consolidated into one state, under the Prince of Orange as their chief, and with Amsterdam

for their capital, whilst the ten southern provinces, whose inhabitants were chiefly Roman Catholic, were induced, by various concessions, to remain under the power of Spain. Such was the origin of the Dutch republic, a combination of seven independent provinces, in each of which the utmost individual liberty of sentiment and action was coincident with considerable political power—a combination of circumstances, which has always proved most favourable to commercial development. Although, like the bundle of arrows, which, in allusion to a well-known fable, they chose as their emblem, each province was individually weak, yet, when all were firmly bound together by the common band of hatred to Spain, and the common ties of religion, they constituted a power, which soon became more formidable in reality than in appearance. Their early efforts were conceived with a modesty which augured well for their ultimate success, and the first coin struck after their alliance, besides its reference to the elements on which they were to maintain their independence, is strongly expressive of the position of their commonwealth. The device was a ship struggling amidst the waves, unassisted by sails or oars, with the motto, "*Incertum quo fata ferant,*" I know not what may be my fate.[1] Some slight assistance from England, and the ruin of Antwerp by the Prince of Parma in 1585, an event which transferred the commerce of that city, that is to say the whole Oriental trade of the Southern Netherlands, to Am-

[1] See Russell's Modern Hist. iii. 9.

sterdam, enabled them to wage a long and tedious war with Spain. Slightly interrupted in 1609 by a truce of twelve years, it extended from 1576 to 1648, when, by the treaty of Munster, Philip IV. acknowledged the United Provinces as free and independent states. A review of this period is a history of the rise of their Oriental commerce.

When Antwerp was besieged by the Prince of Parma, it was a matter of justice as well as of good policy, to assist a city suffering in the same cause, and whose fall threatened the existence of their commonwealth. Singular as it may seem, the Hollanders, concluding that the Protestants would desert it as soon as it fell into the hands of Philip, and that its reduction would occasion a conflux of industrious capitalists into the free states, absolutely preferred an uncertain private advantage to the certain danger to which they would be exposed by its reduction, and obstructed every measure proposed for its relief. Although their affairs, immediately after its fall, were placed in a most critical position, this was more than counterbalanced by the advantages arising from the transfer of its trade to Amsterdam. Whilst Spain and Portugal, rich and fertile kingdoms, annually replenished with the wealth of America, had, from neglect of agriculture and manufactures, become dependent upon their more enterprising neighbours for the luxuries and even the necessaries of life, and had, in consequence, become a poor resourceless state, the United Provinces became rich in spite of every dis-

advantage. Everything was due to their industry; manufactures were conducted with vigour, and their country, naturally barren, became a picture of plenty and fertility, even at the very time when it was the scene of war.

Throughout the whole of the reign of Philip II., the United Provinces, strange as it may appear, prosecuted an open trade with the Spanish dominions in Europe, and by purchasing Indian commodities at Lisbon, and conveying them to the ports of the North Sea and the Baltic, had derived much of their wealth, and vastly increased their naval power. The cause of this phenomenon is probably to be sought, partly in the great mutual advantage which sprang from this trade, but principally in the fact, that the Spanish monarch looked upon the rebellion as the work of a few malcontents, and considered the majority of the people as his loyal subjects. On the accession of Philip III. this policy ceased; the Dutch were forbidden to trade to Lisbon, and such of their vessels as were in the Tagus were at once seized. The interdict however, was issued too late. The Dutch, who were already a strong maritime power, at once observed that it would be impossible to retain their general trade if their assortments were deficient in spices and similar East Indian commodities, for which there was a constant demand in the north of Europe. They were aware that the Portuguese settlements in India had been constantly neglected by their Spanish sovereigns, and apprehended but little opposition from their declining power. Their fleets imme-

diately commenced cruising in the Spanish waters, and their merchants, debarred from obtaining Oriental commodities in the ports of Europe, determined to seek them in those of Asia.

Like the early English navigators, their first attempts were directed to the discovery of a northern passage to India, by which they hoped to gain as great an advantage over the Portuguese by the shortness of the voyage, as the Portuguese had gained over the Venetians by the cheapness of water-carriage. Whilst unsuccessfully engaged in prosecuting voyages in this direction, an accident induced them to despatch a small squadron by the Cape of Good Hope.

Among the obstacles to commerce by this route, was their utter ignorance of all connected with the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, with their navigation, currents, monsoons, harbours, and roadsteads, together with all the details of their commerce, the proper commodities to be exported, their proper assortment, and the most advantageous times and positions for their sale. If to these we add a total want of acquaintance with the language and the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and the certainty of their enemies, the Portuguese and Spaniards, whose factories were spread over every portion of India, thwarting their plans, and using every artifice for their destruction, we may conceive the difficulties which beset their first attempts at trade with the East.

These are said to have been considerably diminished by the intelligence of one man, *Cornelius Houtman*, a

Dutch merchant, who had been in the service of the Portuguese, and had learnt their method of conducting the trade. Being in confinement in a foreign country, whether in slavery among the Turks or imprisoned in Portugal for debt is uncertain, he found means to inform his friends in Amsterdam, that, if the merchants desirous of joining in the India trade would remit a sum sufficient to relieve him from his distress, he would employ his knowledge of India affairs in their service. The requisite sum having been sent, he soon arrived in Amsterdam; an association of merchants under the name of "*The Company for Remote Countries*" was formed, and in 1595 he sailed with a fleet of four well-armed vessels to the East. Partly by trade, and partly by plundering the Portuguese, whose weakness the Dutch had suspected, and now at length knew, he obtained a valuable cargo. Although the profit of the venture was seriously reduced by the loss of one of his vessels, there remained sufficient to satisfy the expectations, if not the wishes, of the subscribers, and to inspire the Hollanders with the full confidence of establishing a successful commerce with India. Several succeeding expeditions were attended with the most profitable results, and sowed the seeds of many others. Fleet after fleet left the Texel for trade and piracy in the Spanish possessions of the Indies, gained numerous victories over the Portuguese, and whilst they did incalculable injury to Spain, contributed immensely to the maritime importance of the United Provinces.

The Dutch had soon the sagacity to discover that,

however valuable was the trade which private individuals and private companies conducted with India, it would be infinitely more profitable to confine it into one channel. It often happened that the vessels of two or more houses and companies arrived at the same port, and by their competition prejudiced their commercial interests. At home, too, their sales often interfered with one another, and the market would at one time be deluged with Indian commodities, at another time a ruinous scarcity would prevail.

However injurious a monopoly in general proves, it appeared requisite in trade to a very distant country; a trade for which large and numerous fortified stations had to be provided, and which required a considerable military force for its defence. It seemed necessary that its officers, too, should have the power of making peace or war in countries where the same regard to treaties, and the same ideas of national law as in Europe, did not prevail. It was obvious that such powers could not with safety be entrusted to private individuals. It became necessary, then, either to create a monopoly, and delegate them to a single company, or leave the trade as before, and send costly armaments for its defence. The former of these methods was adopted, and all the Dutch India companies were in 1601 amalgamated into one, the model after which was constructed our own East India Company.

Hannibal, after defeating every Roman army which he had hitherto fairly encountered, arrived within three miles of Rome itself, and was looking forward to its

speedy surrender, when he was astonished by receiving information from a captive that the very ground on which his army was encamped had just been sold in the *forum*, and had realized as high a price as in time of peace. So secure did the Romans feel of the ultimate and early success of their arms! Little less remarkable was the confidence of the Dutch, who formed the largest joint-stock company up to that time ever planned at the very moment when their existence depended upon the vigorous defence of the neighbouring town of Ostend, which was besieged by the Archduke Albert and Spinola, the first commanders of their age, with a veteran army whose number may be estimated from the fact that 70,000 are said to have fallen in the trenches.

The Company being formed out of several smaller ones, whose members were naturally desirous of retaining under their own management as much of the trade as was possible, possessed a very peculiar constitution. Its government was entrusted to six different chambers, whose influence was proportioned to the amount of their subscriptions and the importance of the cities which they represented. The total capital was between six and seven million florins, and was under the management of sixty-five directors. Of these, twenty-five were allotted to Amsterdam and the neighbouring towns; to Middleburg were assigned twelve; whilst Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn, and Enkhuysen, were each represented by seven. This system, notwithstanding its complicated character, for many

years worked well: and it was not until misfortunes in India produced discontent at home, that its disadvantages became apparent.

Their first efforts were directed against the trade of the Portuguese, and they contrived by the assistance of the natives and the occasional co-operation of the English, who now began to make their appearance in India, to expel them from a considerable number of their factories, supplant them in some of the most lucrative branches of their commerce, and establish that trade with the empire of Japan which they still possess. They next attempted to monopolise several particular branches of traffic, and in pursuance of this policy quarrelled with the English, and at Amboyna and the Spice Islands committed atrocities which have affixed a well-merited stigma upon their character.

In 1622, their charter, which had been granted for a period of twenty-one years, expired, and considerable opposition was made to its renewal. The States-General, however, taking into consideration the immense capital which had been added to the country by their operations, and the division of their profits, which had amounted to no less than 30 millions of florins, or four times their original stock, preferred these certain advantages to the flattering but uncertain promises of success, which were alleged by the opponents of their monopoly. The privileges of their charter were consequently renewed for a further term of twenty-one years, during which they prosecuted their commerce with uninterrupted success. The loss of the Brazils, in which the Dutch

had planted several feeble and ill-managed colonies, contributed to their aggrandizement: for the Portuguese, into whose possession it fell, directed their attention to that country, to the neglect of their settlements in the East. Whilst the capture of Malacca, in 1641, gave them the undisputed command of the Indian Seas.

In 1644, they obtained a third charter for twenty-one years, but not until they had paid into the treasury of the States-General a sum of 1,600,000 florins. The practice of purchasing their charter, thus introduced, was followed on every subsequent renewal, and served as a precedent to the English Government for similar transactions with our own East India Company.

In 1648, came the *Treaty of Munster*, by which the King of Spain ratified, with his pen, that liberty which the United Provinces had obtained by the sword. So altered by a long war of 70 years had become the condition of the contracting parties to that peace, that the Dutch, besides stipulating that each should retain possession of all their territories in America, Africa, and the East Indies, which they then occupied, and nearly all of which, at that time belonging to the Dutch, had been captured from the Spaniards, absolutely insisted upon and obtained the insertion of the following article:— "That the Spaniards shall keep their navigation in the East Indies in the same manner in which they hold it at the present, without being at liberty to go further; and the inhabitants of the Low Countries shall not frequent the places which the Castilians have in the East Indies." By such circumlocution did they render palateable to

the pride of the Spaniards this bitter and insulting condition, by which they bound them not to sail to India by the Cape of Good Hope, but by the southern extremity of America, and to advance no further west in the Indian Seas than to their settlements in the Philippine Islands. Was it to heap this degradation upon Portugal and Spain, that De Gama doubled the Cape, and Columbus discovered another world?

The attention of the Company was next directed to establishing a trade with China. An embassy and rich presents were sent to the emperor, but owing, it was supposed, to the machinations of the Jesuits, no commercial privileges of importance could be obtained. Although Canton had been declared a free port, the Dutch were permitted to frequent it but once in eight years, and even then only with vessels the total number of whose crews was less than one hundred men. Disgusted with the heavy expense and the ill success of their embassy, they neglected for many years direct intercourse with China, and managed to render their settlement at Batavia in Java, in the neighbourhood of the important Straits of Sunda, a great emporium for the commerce of that country, as well as of the islands of the Indian Archipelago. Thither the Chinese traders resorted in considerable numbers, bringing with them silks, tea, porcelain (for which there was beginning to be an immense demand in Europe), musk, and similar goods, and in return receiving Indian and European commodities. From this traffic the Dutch probably reaped as large a profit as if they had themselves fre-

quented the ports of China, inasmuch as the native merchants, from their superior acquaintance with the internal wants of that empire, could provide a proper assortment of goods, and were in a position to pay a remunerative price for those which they purchased, whereas the Dutch, from their ignorance of the country, would, at any rate for some years, have frequently conveyed to the ports articles for which there was no demand in the interior.

Four years after their unfortunate embassy, they found an opportunity of being revenged upon the Jesuits, who had already begun to forsake the service of the Church, for the pursuits of commerce. Understanding that they had a large property on board some Portuguese vessels lying in the harbour of Macassar, in the Island of Celebes, and on the point of sailing for Europe, they sent an expedition thither, and after destroying five vessels, contrived to capture a sixth, whose rich cargo was an ample equivalent for their losses in China. In addition to this, they seized upon the factories of the Portuguese, and annexed the island of Celebes to their Indian dominions.

Their arms, however, were less successful in Tywan or Formosa. This island they had occupied in some of their earliest voyages, and had there established a lucrative settlement, which served as a valuable place of refreshment for their vessels engaged in intercourse with Japan. Coxinga, a Chinese, who had rendered himself independent of the Tartars in the maritime province of Tche-chiang, in 1661, deliberately invaded

Formosa and expelled the Dutch. The island, in the time of his grandson, was again attached to the Chinese Empire, to which it has ever since belonged. With the exception of this reverse, their affairs were everywhere fortunate. The Portuguese were gradually expelled from their settlements in the East Indian islands, and even the English were barely permitted to trade thither. A period of about eighty years from this date may be assigned as the duration of their greatest commercial success. At no other time did they pursue legitimate trade with better fortune, or in a manner more conducive to the welfare of their country. Supreme in the Indian Archipelago, they monopolised the sale of spices in the East as well as in the West. Although at home their Republic was not unfrequently engaged in hostilities with Britain, collisions with the English in India became year by year less common. For, whilst the Dutch affected trade with China and Japan, and directed their attention almost exclusively to the establishment of settlements in the Eastern islands and the neighbouring peninsulas, the English were sufficiently occupied with their wars in Hindostan, and in protecting their numerous factories which, for the most part, were situated upon the mainland. Their dividends during this period were incredibly large, varying, in ordinary years, from 50 to 75 per cent., and in one year, it is said, absolutely amounting to 132. Their prosperity, and the rapid fortunes accumulated by their servants, exposed them to universal envy and con-

stantly endangered the continuance of their rights. Although their charter was never recalled, enormous premiums were paid to Government at its successive renewals, which were made for periods varying from twenty-one to forty years.

In 1776, they effected the conquest of the island of Ceylon, and got possession of its cinnamon trade and the valuable pearl-fisheries on its western coasts. Although this event gave them a new branch of traffic, a variety of circumstances about the same period concurred to diminish the general profits of their trade. The demand for spices, of which, in consequence of their possession of the Banda Islands, they enjoyed almost the entire monopoly, had gradually declined. Their grasping spirit, and notorious and openly-avowed policy of excluding, if possible, all other Europeans from India, excited the indignation of many foes, both at home and abroad. Whilst last, though not least, the English made their appearance in the East in more considerable force than ever, and by their activity and perseverance supplanted them in every quarter. Their dividends rapidly decreased, and in 1776 amounted to no more than 12 or 12½ per cent.

Whilst affairs were in this condition, they were assailed by all the difficulties of the short but disastrous *Two Years War*. The English attacked them in every quarter. Their homeward-bound vessels were taken. They were driven from Ceylon and the continent of India, and even when peace was in Europe made between the two powers, the war was continued in

the East with all its wonted vigour. The Dutch confederacy, meanwhile, was confused by domestic broils and involved in civil war. At a time when assistance was most required, scarcely a vessel sailed from Europe to their succour. Hard upon the heels of these misfortunes followed the French revolution. In 1796 Admiral Rainier took Banda and Amboyna, which were the nucleus of their trade, and the Company's dividends were stopped.

The extortions and tyranny of the French deprived Holland of its wealth; and trade of every description, which has rarely flourished with vigour under the rule of that nation, gradually declined. Demands were constantly made upon the treasury of the United Provinces for military purposes; they were compelled, at great expense, to equip a fleet, which only served to add to the naval glory of Britain. Their Indian possessions, unsupported from the mother-country, failed, in their turn, to pour into her lap the merchandise of India, and, in consequence, the wealth of Europe. Gallic fraternity proved but an inefficacious remedy for her commercial ruin. Holland, when she lost her supremacy in Eastern, lost also her importance in Western, seas. To the nation which usurped her place in Asia was reserved the maritime power which she possessed in Europe. Although since the peace of Vienna a portion of her Indian commerce has found its way into the old channel, and the amount of her trade to Eastern seas comes next, perhaps, to that of the English, who superseded her, yet so inconsiderable is

it, compared with what it once was and with that of Britain, as in no appreciable degree to affect her political relations with the rest of Europe.

We have observed how Portugal, whilst she was conducting one of the most lucrative branches of commerce, was at the same time ruining herself by the continual drain which was made upon her limited population. It may be asked how it was that the same causes did not prove similarly prejudicial to Holland, a country of no larger extent. In the first place, the India trade was no royal monopoly in which no one could participate with advantage unless illegally and resident in India itself. The Dutch, with enlightened liberality, allowed *all* to join in it, and their stock was held by men of every country. The language, too, which they speak has so many kindred forms throughout central Europe that it was an easy matter for individuals from a variety of nations to amalgamate with them. Hence, any decrease of the population was immediately supplied from the provinces of Prussia and Germany. So that her India possessions, far from diminishing the population of Holland, tended materially to its increase.

We remarked also how little of the wealth of the East really found its way into the interior of Portugal in the shape of a permanent addition to her capital. It was not, however, thus with Holland. She everywhere abounded with manufactures. These were bartered for the goods of India, and in consequence her trade involved no impoverishment of the country. Those,

too, of her sons who were not engaged in the direct commerce with India, were not sleeping away their lives in noonday *siestas* in the monotony of Moorish cities, but were occupied in forwarding Oriental goods into every nook of Europe, and exchanging them against the productions of every region of the West.

It was this universal activity which made their Indian trade more lucrative and extensive than any that had preceded it. In the space of twenty-one years after its formation, the Dutch East India Company, as we have seen, divided no less than thirty millions of florins, being more than four times its original stock, whilst that stock itself had become infinitely more valuable by the acquisition of factories, ships, territories, and other indivisible property. In this respect they possessed a considerable advantage over the English. Instead of paying large sums to the native princes for the right of trade and permission to plant settlements, they carried on a constant war with the Portuguese, and got possession of forts and magazines well replenished with commodities suitable to the adjacent territory, and assumed the same superiority over the natives as had been exercised by the Portuguese. Again, unlike that people, they formed no ambitious schemes of universal dominion, and never attempted to compel the natives to embrace their own creed, but constantly professed that their sole desire was a peaceful commerce. At home, too, the Company were not subject to troublesome interference on the part of government in regulating their sales and dividends,

nor prohibited from the import or export of particular articles; and perhaps when we take into account the magnitude of their profits, the premiums paid for the renewals of their charter may not be considered so very immoderate.

Nor was Europe the only quarter of the world to which they bore the produce of the Indies. Their spices were in vast request throughout the whole of Asia. They made considerable profit in trading from port to port of the Indian Ocean, and managed to establish in those seas a carrying trade as universal, and almost as lucrative, as that which they managed in Europe.

It was this keen attention to gain, from whatever quarter it arose, which made the Dutch East India Company so prosperous and their dividends so astonishingly large. It was this wealth, and the immense addition which it made to the Dutch maritime power by employing prodigious numbers of vessels and seamen, who were at any moment ready to fight their battles, whilst during the intervals of peace they were profitably occupied in commercial pursuits, which during the seventeenth century conferred upon Holland its political importance. It was this which made her navy the terror of the neighbouring nations. It was this which gave her the power to hover unmolested over all the western shores of Europe, and to threaten the coasts of even England herself. It was this which, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, afforded her such boundless credit that her stadtholders were

enabled to engage in expensive wars with the most powerful states in Europe.

Before concluding our review of the Dutch India trade we will briefly allude to their grand colony in Southern Africa, which at the fall of their Eastern power came into the possession of the English.

Although from its discovery down to 1650, feeble settlements had occasionally been planted there by the Portuguese, no attempt at regular colonization had been made at the Cape of Good Hope. Its position in a temperate latitude, somewhat more than half-way to India, rendered it a convenient place for European vessels to refit, and for the sick to recruit their strength. The Dutch availed themselves of these advantages, and a flourishing colony was soon formed, which gradually extended itself far into the interior. Thus it has been one of the incidental circumstances attending the route of Indian commerce round the Cape of Good Hope, that Europeans have obtained a footing in Southern Africa. How much this may in after times exercise an influence upon the civilization of that quarter of the world, or what figure its possession will make in the history of mankind, it remains for time to show. With the Mauritius and the island of St. Helena, which were colonised for similar purposes, it fell into the power of the English, and nothwithstanding the expenses to which wars with the natives have subjected us, it is a stronghold which in no small degree gives strength and security to our supremacy over the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SPANISH TRADE TO THE PHILIPPINES.

WHILST the Portuguese at the close of the fifteenth century were attempting the circumnavigation of Africa with the view of discovering a new route to India, the Spaniards, in pursuance of the same object, despatched Columbus to explore the western limits of the Atlantic. The discovery of islands, which, in consequence of their supposed proximity to the regions of which he was in search, were not inaptly named the West Indian, for several years engaged their attention. By a series of voyages it was soon ascertained that the continent of America, presented a barrier to all farther advance westward. In 1513, however, authentic intelligence was received at the colony of Santa Maria, on the Isthmus of Darien, that at the distance of a journey of a few days, stretched another ocean, whose western horizon was unobscured by any appearance of land. In the same year a party of Spaniards crossed the Isthmus, and Nunnez de Balboa, their leader, armed with sword and buckler, advanced into the ocean, and took possession of the Pacific for the Crown of Spain.

Eager but ineffectual attempts at obtaining an en-

trance into this new ocean, led to the examination of a considerable portion of the eastern coast of America. It was not, however, until nine years after its discovery that Fernando de Magalhanes, or, as he is usually styled, Magellan, traversed the Straits which bear his name, crossed the Pacific, and taking in a cargo of spices at the Moluccos, returned to Europe by the Cape, having thus performed the first circumnavigation of the world.

A trade appears to have been immediately commenced between the Moluccos and the west coast of America, and Oriental commodities consigned to Europe were possibly for a short time conveyed across the Isthmus; whilst the Philippine Islands, with Manilla for their capital, were quickly subdued and colonized by the Spaniards. The advantages which were expected to accrue from a commerce conducted in these seas, induced the King of Portugal, who claimed their sole navigation by virtue of the bull of Eugenius IV., to remonstrate against what he considered a violation of his rights. Unwilling, however, to provoke the resentment of Charles V., King of Spain, Emperor of Germany, and Sovereign of the seventeen wealthy Provinces of the Netherlands—he compounded the matter by paying a sum of 350,000 ducats, in consideration of which Charles desisted from sending vessels to the Indian seas, reserving, however, the condition, that he might resume his right on the repayment of the sum deposited. As the Portuguese, ultimately, never engaged in the commerce of the

Pacific, this agreement had not simply the effect of excluding the Spaniards, but of preventing every description of trade in that ocean, until the appearance of the English and Americans. To this circumstance, we must attribute the comparatively recent period at which the Pacific, though traversed 300 years ago, was first examined with any accuracy. A small but active trade, however, has always been conducted by Chinese between their own country and the Philippines; and the inhabitants of Manilla, from the first settlement of the town to the present day, have preserved an intercourse with the Spanish main, by means, first of one, and afterwards of two, large vessels called *galleons*, which perform an annual voyage to Acapulco in Mexico. The origin of this intercourse is attributed to the following circumstance.

The missionaries to whom Philip II., in his zeal for the propagation of the Christian religion, had entrusted the conversion of the natives of the Philippines, represented the impossibility of performing the Eucharist in an island destitute of corn and wine, and requested a supply of those necessaries from the nearest American port. Philip, notwithstanding some opposition, acceded to the proposal, and licensed the Viceroy of Mexico, annually to send to Manilla a vessel laden with flour and wine, at the same time giving the strictest orders that no other merchandise whatever should be carried to or from Manilla. This latter mandate, as might be expected, was but indifferently observed. A voyage of several thousand miles, performed by an empty vessel,

simply to fulfil the conditions of a treaty, the infraction of which in this particular involved no loss to the contracting parties (for the Portuguese, as we have observed, had never established any traffic in the Pacific), appeared as unnecessary, as it was profitless. The Viceroys of Mexico and Manilla, agreed that the vessel, instead of returning without cargo, should carry Chinese and Indian silk and cotton goods to be sold on their joint account. This trade, which was highly remunerative, gradually increased as the energy and vigilance of the Spanish government was diminished. Others were permitted to participate in its advantages, and in a few years grew to such a magnitude, as to require two vessels of 1,500 or 1,800 tons, which down to the present day, have annually visited Acapulco, bearing thither rich stuffs, linens made in China, diamonds, pearls, spiceries, drugs, tea, porcelain, &c., in such quantities as in former times was sufficient for the consumption of the whole province of Mexico. The returns have always consisted of numerous European commodities, and the original flour and wine, but especially of specie, to the amount of several million dollars. A treasure, the acquisition of which from the time of Drake downwards, has been the day-dream of every buccaneer on the Spanish main.

The other efforts of the Spaniards at trade with India, have been unfortunate in the extreme. The Treaty of Munster had, from change of political circumstances in Europe, become itself obsolete, before they made any attempt to evade or alter that article, by which they

were confined to trading with India through their settlements in America. In 1733, nearly a century after its confirmation, an association under the title of "*The Royal Company of the Philippine Islands,*" was formed, without the slightest opposition from the Dutch, for commerce beyond the Cape. After obtaining a charter with ample privileges, either from mismanagement or from the impossibility of realizing their capital, no vessels were equipped, and the project resulted in an entire failure.

Thirty years afterwards, the Spanish monarch, on his own account, freighted some vessels to India and Manilla, and a languid trade by way of the forbidden Cape existed until 1785, when a second "*Royal Company of the Philippines,*" was established, which with the assistance of the *Guipuscoan Company of the Caracas*, proposed to unite the trade of Asia with that of Europe and America. Every effort was made by the court, the people, and even the clergy, throughout the Spanish empire, to increase the stock, and give effect to the operations of the company; but its success was far from equivalent to the anticipations of the public. Attempts were in vain made to improve the condition, and increase the exports of the Philippines, and to open an intercourse with India. In the Western hemisphere, however, a considerable trade, which had been established by the Caracas Company, was conducted with their American colonies until the French Revolution, and the events which arose therefrom, disarranged their plans and ruined their commerce. Subsequent attempts

were made for its renewal, but abroad the growing discontent of their colonies, and at home political changes, and above all the activity of the English and Americans, in what is called, the "*West Coast Trade,*" interfered with their success, and their commercial transactions were finally abandoned.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COMMERCE OF THE ENGLISH WITH INDIA.

> " Ours is the harvest, where the Indians mow,
> We plough the deep, and reap what others sow."—*Waller.*

THE English were among the first to appreciate the advantages likely to accrue from the trade with India. There existed among them, however, a belief that the passage thither by way of the Cape, was the exclusive property of the Spaniards, or their subjects, the Portuguese. In times of peace any attempt at invading this supposed right was discountenanced; in time of war the superiority of the Spaniards in the Indies, their extra-vigilance, and the dangers of an unknown, but hostile region, naturally tended to suppress all mercantile efforts in that quarter. The enterprising spirit, which is characteristic of the nation, prompted them to undertake voyages in discovery of some fresh route to India, of which they might enjoy the peaceable and undisturbed possession, and the "*North-east*" and "*North-west*" passages were unsuccessfully tried.

As early as 1497, not more than three years after the discovery of America by Columbus, and exactly two months before Vasco di Gama sailed from Lisbon, on the successful voyage in which he rounded the Cape,

John Cabot, a Venetian in the service of Henry VII., proposed to reach India by holding a north-westerly course. A fleet of several vessels, partly belonging to that monarch, and partly to merchants of Bristol, was equipped and entrusted to his charge for accomplishing this object. The design, however, was frustrated by the mutinous spirit of his crew. After reaching, it is said, a latitude of 67½ N., they compelled him to direct his course southwards; and he ultimately fell in with Newfoundland. and the coast of North America. This discovery, however, which has since exercised such an incalculable influence upon the fortunes and prosperity of this country, was attended with no immediate result. The failure of the expedition in its grand object of finding an ocean-route to India, and the excitement soon afterwards produced by the Reformation, which threw men's thoughts into a chanel so widely different, prevented for many years any further progress in maritime discovery.

Although in the reign of Henry VIII., Sebastian Cabot, who had been the partner of his father's voyages, explored under English colours, certain portions of the American continent, it was not until sixty years after the discovery of Newfoundland, that any fresh efforts were made to open out a communication with the East. Cabot, whose services Edward VI. had recompensed by a considerable pension, resided in England, and inherited his father's belief in the practicability of reaching India by a shorter route than that by the Cape. As all attempts to the West had hitherto failed, he proposed

the experiment of sailing to the North-east, and supported his views with the most plausible arguments. In 1553, he induced a number of merchants to subscribe a capital of 6,000*l.*, to prosecute discovery in this direction. They obtained a charter from Edward VI., and were, it is supposed, the first chartered joint-stock company ever formed in England.

Three vessels, under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby, were despatched to the northern seas. After passing the North Cape, they were dispersed in a storm. Sir Hugh Willoughby with his whole crew took refuge in an obscure harbour in Lapland, from which he was unable to emerge. The succeeding spring, the fishermen of the country visited his ship, and found the whole crew frozen to death, Sir Hugh himself sitting in his cabin with his will and journal, the last object on which he had been engaged, lying before him. Chancellour, the commander of another of the vessels, penetrated to the south of the White Sea; thence travelled to the court of Ivan Basilowitz, Czar of Russia, and established commercial relations between England and that country. These, down to our own time, have been carried on by the Russian Company, whose trade has chiefly been conducted at Archangel, a town at the mouth of the North Dwina.

After this period, frequent were the attempts made to discover a North-west passage to India. Though fruitless in themselves, they led to the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose operations have extended over, and attached to the interests of England, a tract

of country, less wealthy it is true, but not less extensive than that acquired by the East India Company.

The reconstruction of the overland communication with the East, was the next scheme which occupied the attention of the public. It was determined to participate with the Venetians in the advantages of a trade, which, in an age still recent, had conferred upon their little republic unparalleled opulence, and several stations for the management of which they still retained in Persia and India. An expedition was despatched consisting of two merchants for the arrangement of matters connected with general trade, a painter for scientific investigations, and a jeweller to purchase and decide upon the value of precious stones, which were still considered the most important objects of Oriental commerce, and acted as a convenient currency, in regions almost destitute of a regular coinage. The whole party visited India, and one of their number penetrated to Pegu, Ceylon and Cochin. The disadvantages, however, attending the old route, compared with the less expensive carriage of goods round the Cape, rendered their efforts unavailing.

Meanwhile, expeditions which had been undertaken merely for warlike purposes, were the means of furnishing English merchants with all the information that was necessary for the trade with India. Sir Francis Drake, in 1587, took on her homeward voyage a Portuguese carrack, and, from the documents which were found on board, gained a thorough insight into a trade which had hitherto been kept secret by its

possessors. As England was then at war with Spain, the success of Drake, the encouragement which he received from Queen Elizabeth, and the rapid and immense fortunes which were made by his followers, induced many others to join him in privateering excursions against the Spaniards, on the Eastern as well as on the Western main. By these means many English sailors became familiarised with everything connected with the trade and navigation of the Indian seas. Cavendish, one of these adventurers, after a two years' voyage, in which he had explored the Eastern Archipelago and visited the Molucco Islands, reported on his return that, "among some of the heathen people he was well entreated," and that "his countrymen might have trade as freely as the Portugals, if they themselves will."

Stimulated by this information, private merchants hastened to embark their capital in ventures, which promised to be lucrative, and an impulse was given to the commerce of the country. The Turkey Company, which had long traded to Lisbon and the ports at the east of the Mediterranean for Indian commodities, found themselves, owing to the war with the Spaniards, prevented from all intercourse with Portugal, and the navigation of the Mediterranean dangerous and intolerably expensive. The price of pepper and spices, articles which could only be obtained through the Dutch, attained a ruinous height, and the merchants of London, exasperated at the monopolizing avarice of that nation, were assiduous in endeavouring to obtain

a share in their opulent traffic. Another expedition was sent overland to Agra to the court of the Great Mogul. After a delay of three years, occasioned most probably by the machinations of the Venetians, who were but ill pleased at the appearance of English merchants in the East, they obtained ample commercial privileges. These, however, were rendered worthless by the impossibility of obtaining regular access to the interior of Asia.

At length, in 1599, the lord mayor, most of the aldermen, and the principal merchants, formed an association for the purpose of trading to India. Their subscribed capital amounted to little more than 30,000*l.*, a sum which, in the present day, is barely sufficient to carry on a respectable business in the hands of a single merchant. Such was the origin of the *English East India Company.*

With considerable difficulty, and after long negotiations, they obtained, on the last day of the year 1600, a charter from Queen Elizabeth constituting the gentlemen named therein, "one bodie corporate and politique indeed, by the name of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies," with succession power to purchase lands, to sue and be sued, and to have a common seal. They were granted the exclusive privilege of trading during fifteen years "to all parts of Asia, Africa, and America, beyond the Cape of Good Hope, eastward to the Straits of Magellan, except such countries or ports as were in the actual possession of any Christian prince in amity

with the Queen." This charter, whilst bestowing upon them various important privileges, and the powers and rights necessary for preserving their monopoly, imposed, however, some curious restrictions. They were allowed "the freedom of the customs for six voyages outward, in regard that many experiments must be made, before it will be known what commodities are best suited to the Indian market; as also in regard that the Dutch, for their encouragement, are freed from the customs for divers years, both inward and outward." Six of their ships and six pinnaces, with 500 seamen, were, in "any time of restraint," to be allowed to depart on their voyages, "without any stay or contradiction," unless the emergency, which required their assistance for the defence of the country, were in the last degree pressing. On the other hand, they were bound "to import within six months after the return of every voyage, except the first one, as much gold or silver as shall be equal to the value of the silver exported by them." A restriction which might have been suggested by Pliny the elder, so exactly does it coincide with his well-known ideas of the impoverishing effect of the India trade, by the immense export of bullion requisite for its management.

The glory and wide-spread dominion of Rome, have invested the story of Romulus and Remus with a thrilling interest. The unadorned plainness of reality, the sober and common-place transactions of commerce, are destitute of the romantic interest, which belongs to the wild legend of the wolf, the Riminal fig-tree, the

woodpecker, and the hearth of Faustulus. The first planting, however, of the tree under whose shade and protection the unnumbered myriads of the East are advancing, slowly it may be, but still advancing, towards the enlightenment and civilization of the West, merit more than a passing notice. This shall be our apology for the details into which we are now proceeding.

The company after obtaining their charter, immediately raised a capital of 69,000*l.*, sixty-eight thousand of which were forthwith expended on equipping and loading with provisions, merchandise and bullion, four ships, the largest and best which England could then supply. These were:—

The *Dragon*	. 600 tons	... 202 men.	Capt. James Lancaster.
The *Hector*	. 300 „	... 108 „	Capt. John Middleton.
The *Ascension*	. 260 „	... 82 „	Capt. William Brand.
The *Susan*	. 240 „	... 88 „	Capt. John Heyward.
	1,400	480	

To these was added the *Guest*, to serve as a victualler. The tonnage of the whole fleet, however, was scarcely equal to half the tonnage of more than one of our modern leviathans. In each of the ships were embarked three merchants, as supercargoes, to transact the business of the Company, and Captain Lancaster was appointed admiral, invested by the Queen with the power of exercising martial law, and furnished with introductory letters to the Kings of Bantam and Acheen.

In February 1601, these four harbingers of our

Oriental greatness, left Woolwich, and in April took their departure from Torbay. From ignorance of the winds and currents they tediously accomplished in *a year and a quarter* a voyage, which modern clipper ships have performed in about seventy days; and in June, 1602, arrived at Acheen in Sumatra. A pompous and gracious reception here awaited them, and they obtained from the king the most advantageous commercial privileges. The crop of pepper, the commodity in which they were chiefly in quest, had, however, unfortunately failed in that part of the island, and they found it impossible to complete their cargo. Lancaster thereupon concerted with the captain of a Dutch vessel then at Acheen, to attack the settlement at Malacca, belonging to the Portuguese. He had certainly no instructions for pursuing such a course, but the deficiency of the pepper crop, and the absolute necessity of rendering the first voyage profitable, as well as the royal favours, which on his return had been bestowed upon the buccaneer, Sir Francis Drake, suggested the expediency of attacking a nation, who had long been the maritime enemies of his country. Sending the *Susan* to Priaman on the south-west of Sumatra, where pepper happened to be obtainable, he set out with the rest of his fleet, and the Dutch ship, for the conquest of Malacca. Encountering, however, on their voyage thither, a homeward-bound Portuguese carrack of 900 tons, they seized her, transferred her valuable cargo of calicoes and Indian manufactures to their own vessels, and returned to Acheen.

Despatching the *Ascension* to England with the pepper and spices which they had already collected, Lancaster joined the *Susan* at Priaman; thence visited Bantam, where he purchased pepper at, what was considered, the astonishingly small price of sixpence per pound, and completed his cargo of spices. He then settled factors at Bantam, and in the Molucco Islands, leaving for their protection a pinnace and twelve men, and, after a stormy and perilous voyage of a year and a half, arrived in the Downs in September, 1603.

On his return, he found London afflicted with a plague, and commercial affairs in such a state of depression, that the Company were unable to raise even the money requisite for discharging the wages of their seamen. Upon the throne, too, sat a monarch, in character widely different from the enlightened Elizabeth. James the First, with a grasping eagerness for money, for which he was individually remarkable, possessed the reckless neglect of obligations which was characteristic of the whole family of the Stuarts. He compelled the Company *immediately* to pay more than 20,000*l.* in customs, although it had been especially stipulated in their charter, that these might be discharged by bonds payable in six and twelve months. The Company in consequence were obliged to call upon every subscriber of 250*l.* to advance 200*l.*, and to receive in lieu, at a fixed price, pepper to the amount of 500*l.* of which he might dispose at his own discretion. Such, in imitation of the Dutch East India Company, whose division of profits was usually made in merchandise, was the first

dividend of the English East India Company. The loss and inconvenience, however, of this method of distributing their profits was presently obvious, and soon led to its abandonment. It remains to be observed, that numerous and unexpected difficulties prevented the accounts of the first voyage from being finally closed, until nine years after the incorporation of the Company, and the profits of the venture were far from extravagant.

The first, and probably a second, expedition were undertaken at the expense of the whole Company. It had been provided, however, by an article of their charter that not only members themselves, but their sons (being above twenty-one years of age) apprentices and factors might freely use the trade for their private profit. For the next ten years, expeditions were annually equipped, but apparently at the expense of a few individuals, members of the company. Such voyages, however, were conducted under vast discouragements. The length of time which they occupied arising from ignorance of the currents and periodic winds of the Southern Ocean, the neglect of the diet and regimen requisite for counteracting the diseases incident to long voyages, produced an awful mortality among their seamen. This, combined with the continually reiterated outcry against the real or fancied evils of exporting bullion, and the waste of ships incurred in such distant navigation, were far from investing the India trade with that popularity, which it has ordinarily acquired. The King, too, frequently infringed their charter by

granting licenses to individuals, not members of the Company, to trade in the East. Such persons, unfettered by any obligations, and eager for present gain, without any regard for the future interests of the trade, degenerated into the most detestable pirates. They plundered without distinction the friends or foes of their countrymen, and it was no easy matter for the agents of the company to make a native prince understand the relations, in which they themselves stood with reference to such freebooters.

Omitting dry details, the results of the first twelve voyages of the company or its members were the establishment of a trade and factory at Bantam, the Moluccos, and Surat: the appearance of the English in the Red Sea and in Japan (which was not however attended with any advantageous results), and several naval victories over the Portuguese, whose fleets had hitherto ridden supreme in the Indian Ocean. In addition to this, they joined with considerable success in the native trade of the country, and large profits were made by conveying the calicoes of the Coromandel coast to the Oriental islands, where they were in great request. Negotiations, too, were opened with the coast of Persia, whither Sir Thomas Shirley was despatched as ambassador from James I.

The average profit attending these voyages has been calculated at 138 per cent. As a drawback against this apparently large premium, it must be remarked that the voyages commonly extended to three or four years; that the profits (often large) of numerous trips

from one portion of India to another are included: that after their arrival in this country India goods were disposed of at long credits of eighteen months or even two years: that owing to a variety of circumstances the accounts of a voyage were rarely closed under six or eight years: and that no deduction was made for insurance. If the time occupied in performing, and finally adjusting the accounts of a single voyage, be taken at an average of seven years, it will be found that the profit *per annum* of these ventures was scarcely 20 per cent. As the current rate of interest at that period was 8 per cent., the profit, which the subscribers received for their capital, can scarcely be considered as adequate to the very great risk, which they incurred.

It was presently discovered that the policy of allowing each voyage to be a private concern, in which members of the Company might embark whatever capital they deemed fit, was productive of great commercial evils. Competition in India had raised immensely the prices of native commodities, and glutted the market with European merchandise; whilst competition at home, and the irregular arrival of vessels, frequently rendered it necessary that their cargoes should be sold at prices ruinously low. This state of affairs induced the Company for a short time to employ their vessels in a new channel. They resolved to engage in the Greenland fishery, probably not only under the expectation of present profit, but with the distant hope that some of their whalers might light upon that

North-West passage to the East, conjectures concerning which had so long amused the credulity of the West. They manned their vessels with experienced fishermen from Norway and Biscay, whose inhabitants were, next to the Norwegians, the oldest whale-fishers in Europe. The Company persevered in this branch of their trade for several years, partly on their own account, and partly in conjunction with the Russia Company, when a series of misfortunes led to its relinquishment.

In 1613, it was determined that no more voyages should be undertaken on separate accounts. A joint capital of nearly half a million was subscribed for managing the affairs of the Company for the next four years, and four vessels were despatched under the command of Captain Downton. At Surat, being attacked by the Portuguese with an overwhelming force, which is stated at six galleons, three ships, and sixty frigates, they were enabled, most probably with considerable assistance from the forces of the Mogul, not only to beat them off, but to gain a series of victories which vastly redounded to their honour and interest. The voyage, in addition to its commercial advantages, was the means of establishing several new factories, and promoting an excellent understanding between the agents of the Company and those of the Great Mogul. This was further increased by the judicious conduct of Sir Thomas Roe, who, as ambassador from King James, resided for three years at the court of Delhi. He obtained important privileges for

those of the Company's settlements, which had been founded in the dominions of the Moguls, and has left us an interesting account of the court and government of Jehangir, one of the most powerful of the Mahometan rulers of India.

The following catalogue of the factories, which the company already possessed, will give some idea of the extent and importance, which their operations were assuming. They were—

Bantam, Jacatra, or Batavia, Japara, } in Java.
Banda, in Banda Islands.
Benjarmassig, Socodania, } in Borneo.
Calicut, on Malabar coast.
Masulipatam, Petapoli, } on Coromandel coast.
Patan, in Malacca.
Macassar, in island of Celebes.

Acheen, Jambee, Tecoa, } in Sumatra.
Firando, in Japan.
Surat, Amadavad, Agra, Ajmeer, Burampore, } in the dominions of the Mogul.
Siam, capital of Siam.

The success of their operations began at this period to be materially crippled by the quarrels and competition, which existed between their agents and those of the Dutch East India Company. To such an extent were these differences carried, that the interference of the respective Governments was absolutely necessary. Commissioners were appointed for their arrangement, but without success. The Dutch proposed that the two Companies should expel the Spanish and Portuguese from all their settlements, and monopolize the Oriental commerce. The English, on the other hand, thought this scheme neither honest nor practicable, whilst the advantages which would arise from its

success would be almost entirely on the side of the Dutch. Their proposition was rejected, and misunderstandings were consequently as frequent as ever. In 1616, on a further increase of the English Company's stock, fresh attempts were made to amalgamate the two Companies. A report that the King of Denmark was on the eve of establishing an East India Company, and that energetic steps were being taken in the same direction in France, led to the expectation that such proposals would at length be favourably received. They were, however, again rejected, and the Dutch immediately proceeded to the most unjustifiable measures for ruining the trade of the English.

The Company, as well to protect themselves from such malevolence, as to clear the Eastern Seas from English interlopers, who not only injured their commerce, but by the most barefaced piracy brought disgrace upon the national character, obtained permission from the King to send out a squadron of six large vessels. These were placed under the command of Sir Thomas Dale, an officer armed with the most extensive powers, but by the strictest injunctions forbidden to be the first aggressor against the subjects of any Christian power. He appears, notwithstanding, to have joined the Shah of Persia in clearing the Persian Gulf of pirates, and in expelling the Portuguese from Ormuz, which, to requite their services, the Persian monarch made over to the Company. The spoils which they gained on this occasion are said to have

been enormous; the money was not counted, but measured by boat-loads.

Previous to this time, the Company's vessels had invariably made their voyages armed in the most efficient manner, as well for protection against country vessels, as to secure themselves from the animosity of the Portuguese, who, having long ago degenerated into pirates, looked upon the East as their rightful prey, and considered Europeans of every other nation as robbers, who were depriving them of their legitimate property. Dale's expedition, however, was the first which had been despatched simply for the purposes of war, and may be regarded as the first departure from a policy purely commercial.

A treaty was at length, in 1619, effected between the rival Companies of the Dutch and English. By it all past offences were consigned to oblivion; all persons, ships, and merchandise which had been seized by either party were restored; and terms securing to each Company an equal interest in the trade were agreed upon, and arranged to continue in force for twenty years. Hardly a year had elapsed ere the Companies were again at variance; and in 1623, the Dutch perpetrated a cold-blooded atrocity, which for many years attached to their character a well-merited obloquy. This was the *Massacre of Amboyna.*

They pretended to suspect that the English, who numbered but twenty men, had conspired to deprive them of Amboyna, the largest of the Molucco islands, and the richest in cloves, which they had secured by

four forts and a garrison of 500 soldiers. They thereupon seized all Englishmen resident in that, or the neighbouring islands, and having inflicted upon them a long series of tortures, more becoming the cells of the Inquisition than the factories of Protestant merchants, put all to death, with the exception of three or four persons, who were imprudently permitted to survive and tell the awful tale. Out of regard for his superior rank, they provided a black pall for Captain Towerson, the chief man among the English, the expense of which, however, they did not forget to set down to the English Company. Lastly, they consummated their wickedness by returning thanks to God, ostensibly for their escape from a danger which, as it afterwards appeared, they were very conscious had never existed, really for their deliverance from rivals who materially interfered with the magnitude of their gains. True is the trite quotation—well might the poet say—

> . . . . . " Quo non mortalia pectora cogis
> Auri sacra fames ?"

The reader will expect to hear that the perpetrators of this horrid massacre met with condign punishment from their own countrymen, if not immediately, yet at any rate, when it was positively and indignantly demanded by the insulted majesty of this realm. Let him know, however, that a Stuart filled the throne. That although the principal perpetrators of this crime were once actually our prisoners in Portsmouth, the Secretary of State connived at, if he did not absolutely

aid in their escape, and after more than a quarter of a century, it was reserved for the energetic Cromwell to insist upon, and to obtain, the punishment of the surviving authors of this outrage on humanity.

The Dutch, after annihilating their rivals in Amboyna, proceeded to expel them from the rest of the Spice Islands, plundered their factories, and are said to have attempted to re-enact at Firando, in Japan, the tragedy of Amboyna. The Company, unsupported from England, which was convulsed with civil strife, and involved in a series of hostilities with the Dutch, who were their superiors in the East, was reduced to the greatest difficulties. King Charles infringed their charter by authorizing Sir William Courten, the head of another company, to send vessels to the East; answered their remonstrances by declaring that such vessels were despatched on a secret enterprise which could not be revealed; gave them the most solemn assurances that nothing was intended disadvantageous to their interests; and finally sent the vessels, *without cargoes*, to exercise piracy in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean! The Mahometans, in consequence, made reprisals upon the property of the Company; expelled them from Surat, one of their oldest and most profitable settlements, and inflicted upon them a loss estimated at 100,000*l*. A suit, which they commenced against Courten for this injustice, was interrupted by a message from the King, desiring that "Sir William Courten be not troubled on the subject of his ships." Such was the tergiversation which the Stuarts denominated "king-craft." The

reader will not be surprised to learn that the new company, after some years of piracy in the East, and after an attempt at establishing an intercourse with China, which resulted in the English being declared the enemies of the empire, and for ever excluded from its ports, was ultimately bankrupt, and involved in its failure many hundreds of its creditors in England.

Nor was this the only particular in which the Company suffered from the bad faith of King Charles. Engaged in a religious war with his Scottish subjects, and unwilling to have recourse to Parliament for obtaining the constitutional means of raising money for the maintenance of his army, he frequently fell back upon measures which were as unworthy of the dignity of a monarch, as they were destitute of honour and honesty. Besides borrowing of the Company at the beginning of his reign a sum of 30,000*l.*, which there can be little doubt was never repaid, in 1640 he proposed to raise money by purchasing and re-selling the whole of the Company's *pepper!!* giving ample security for the payment. After some debate they submitted to the demand on receiving the bond of no less than ten gentlemen. The pepper was valued at more than 50,300*l.* After the lapse of twenty-three years, the Company accepted a composition, closed the account, and discovered that they had sustained a loss of 31,500*l.*

In consequence of these reverses their affairs laboured under the greatest depression. Subscriptions for undertaking new voyages were not forthcoming, and the

Governor waited upon the King, and represented to him the condition of their affairs, which arose from "the want of satisfaction for the wrongs done by the Dutch, the imposition of new duties on Indian commodities,[1] the depredations of Courten's ships in the Red Sea, and the obligation of the Company to sell their saltpetre to the King only, and at his own price." To these were added the horrors and excitement of the civil war, which had already commenced, and which damped all mercantile speculation. Whilst their difficulties were still further augmented by the wreck of one of their homeward-bound vessels, valued at 30,000*l.*, and another scandalous injustice which they sustained at the hands of the King. The commander of one of their vessels, to display his loyalty at the expense of his duty to his employers, carried a ship confided to his care to Bristol, and presented her and her cargo to the King to support the expenses of his war against the Parliament. Truth obliges me to confess, that Charles, instead of punishing the traitor, was base enough to accept of the treachery. By this infidelity the Company suffered a further loss of 20,000*l.*

For several succeeding years trade was feeble and inactive, and the Company led a lingering existence, only diversified by their engaging for a short period in a trade with the coast of Africa, and by their occupying as a resting-place for their homeward-bound vessels,

[1] Viz., upon pepper. The duty was raised to 75 per cent. upon the real price. Probably this was to enable his Majesty to sell his pepper at a good profit.

the Island of St. Helena, which had been deserted by the Dutch. Under the vigorous administration of Cromwell their prospects assumed a brighter hue. Having humbled the maritime pride of the Dutch, he exacted satisfaction for the massacre of Amboyna; and as some compensation for the subsequent injuries which had been committed in the Spice Islands, he compelled them to pay to the English Company the sum of 85,000*l.* Some months afterwards he demanded of the Directors and obtained a temporary loan of 50,000*l.*, which was honestly repaid at the end of a few weeks.

In consideration of this favour, the Company, whose charter had hitherto been simply granted by the Monarch, had great hopes of obtaining a confirmation of their privileges from the Protector. Republicanism and monopoly are, however, diametrically opposite; and Cromwell looked with indifference upon rights, of whose justice as well as expediency he was probably more than doubtful. Although there was no formal abrogation of the privileges of the Company, as has been sometimes asserted, interlopers were connived at, and for several years there was a general scramble for the advantages of the trade. The English market was glutted with Oriental merchandise, and there resulted the ordinary effects of a commercial crisis. In the East, matters were still worse. Besides an overstock of European commodities, the trade itself, whose success frequently depended upon the most delicate negotiations with the native princes, negotiations which could only be advantageously managed by the exertions of many agents all

actuated by the same policy, and obeying the same instructions, fell into the utmost disorganization.

The Company for several years merely carried on a paltry trade to prevent their privilege from expiring for want of use, and with the expectation of resuming it at some more fortunate period. In modern times a glut of the market contains the germs of its own remedy, and in a few years trade resumes its course, often benefitted by a disaster, which has swept off the unprincipled and the adventurer, the man of straw and the wanton speculator. The principles of modern commerce, however, scarcely apply to the novelties and anomalies of that of India, as it existed in the seventeenth century. The evils of prematurely opening the trade in distant seas, in which this country possessed no naval forces adequate either for its protection, or for restraining the evil conduct of its merchants, ultimately induced private adventurers to become the most earnest suitors for the restoration of the trade to an exclusive Company.

In the meantime the prospects of the Company grew so clouded that, in 1657, they absolutely offered for sale their privileges and fixed property. This circumstance, combined with reiterated complaints of the irregularities into which the trade had fallen, led to an apprehension that, unless some speedy measures, were taken the whole Oriental commerce might be lost to the country, and induced the Protector and his Council to grant the Company a fresh confirmation of all their old privileges, and to authorize their using the most vigorous measures for

clearing the Indian Seas of all interlopers. Active exertions were thereupon made for the re-establishment of their trade and factories, for procuring vessels of adequate tonnage, and for restoring every department of their service, which had suffered decay during a long period of inactivity.

In the midst of these preparations came the Restoration. The injustice which they had suffered from Charles I. was forgotten. They were among the first to congratulate his son upon his ascending the throne, accompanying their address with rich presents of plate for the King and his brother. Whether this was the spontaneous effusion of their loyalty, or a prudent act of policy, we will not pause to enquire. Its effect upon their interests was satisfactory in the extreme. They had feared that the confirmation of their charter by Cromwell, might prejudice their interests with Charles. They discovered to their surprise, that he was but too ready to grant a new charter, containing all the articles of that of Queen Elizabeth, and adding thereto other important rights, inasmuch as it afforded an opportunity of cancelling that, which had recently been obtained from his predecessor.

During the reign of Charles II. the career of the Company was in the highest degree prosperous, and their operations were conducted on a scale of magnitude, which led to their being viewed as a national interest. The marriage of that Prince with Catherine of Braganza, in addition to other commercial advantages, was the means of putting this country into possession of the

island of Bombay and its dependencies. This the King for a reasonable sum made over to the Company, and thus afforded them a town and harbour, which gave security to their commercial operations with the Western coast of India, and relieved them from the exactions of the Mogul governors, and the general uncertainty which sometimes attended their trade at the neighbouring factory of Surat. On the East coast, they acquired still more important privileges. Many of the native Princes had learnt to appreciate the advantages of their commerce, and facilitated its progress by all the means in their power. The Nabob of the Carnatic allowed them to compound for the customs to which they were liable at Madras by a fixed annual payment, and the King of Golconda actually released them from all dues whatever. In Hindostan, a Mr. Boughton, an English surgeon, had the good fortune to cure a daughter of the Emperor Jehangir, as well as a favourite lady of the Nabob of Bengal, of a dangerous illness. The former, to testify his gratitude, granted him the right of trading throughout the whole of his dominions, without being subject to the payment of any customs. The latter, in order to prevail upon him to remain in the country, extended the same privileges of trade to all those of his countrymen who should enter Bengal. Boughton informed the Company of this favourable disposition of the Nabob, and a factory and flourishing commerce arose at Hooghly, a town on the western branch of the Ganges, at no great distance from Calcutta, and this together with several adjacent villages was purchased

from the proprietors. Their interest as well as personal security soon afterwards compelled them to take part in native politics, and it was found expedient to protect their recent acquisitions by strong fortifications. Such was the virtual commencement of the Company's territorial possessions in Bengal.

This prosperity derived a further increase from the successful introduction into Europe of several descriptions of Indian commodities previously unknown. Among these may be mentioned *tea* (which was the means of opening out a trade with China), a variety of new drugs but especially wrought silk, calicoes, chintzes, and muslins. The fashion of wearing Indian muslins for some time became so general, as almost entirely to supplant the cambrics and lawns of France and Silesia, and the fine flaxen fabrics of Flanders and Germany.

We may notice, incidentally, that it was the Company's trade which gave rise to our *calico-printing*. Calicoes were imported and printed in imitation of the printed chintzes of India, and presently became an article of general use in female dress. This branch of manufacture grew into such importance, as ultimately to render unnecessary the importation of such Indian fabrics; and at last, for the encouragement of British industry, their introduction was, in 1700, altogether prohibited.

One of the results of the Company's prosperity was that at home loud outcries were raised against their charter. Pamphlets, which since the revolution had

become the great means of mooting subjects of public importance and examining their merits, were incessantly directed against their monopoly. From an answer to one of these, written in 1677, by Sir Josiah Child, who had been for some time Governor of Bombay, and consequently possessed the most reliable means of information, we are furnished with some interesting particulars concerning the India trade, and the necessity which was supposed to exist for its being all confined to one Company. He calculates that their imports for the season 1674–5 consisted of the following articles:—

Calico, pepper, saltpetre, indigo, raw silks, wrought silks, drugs, &c., to the value of	£860,000
Goods imported by officers and seamen on their own private account, and consisting of diamonds, pearls, musk, ambergris, &c., to the value of	250,000
	1,110,000
Deduct for factors, working expenses, &c., in India .	60,000
Total imports	£1,050,000

Their exports consisted of—

Bullion	£320,000
Woollen goods and other merchandise . .	110,000
Bullion by private trade	80,000
Woollen goods, &c., by private trade . .	40,000
Total exports . . .	£550,000

Subtracting this from the total imports, we have 500,000*l.*—the addition which the Company was annually making to the national wealth.

Their trade, moreover, gave employment to 5,000 tons of shipping, and to seamen in proportion; whilst

the vessels required for its protection added materially to the maritime power of the country. This fleet consisted of about thirty-five ships, varying from 300 to 600 tons in burden, and carrying from forty to seventy guns.[1] With regard to the imports, that of *saltpetre* was considered to be the most important. Unsuccessful attempts to obtain this article in England had frequently been made, but they had hitherto been attended with nothing but unpopularity and great private vexation. Its necessity for the defence of the country rendered it an article of prime importance. It was supposed to be generated under the floors of houses, stables, and pigeon-cotes, and the "saltpetre-men" were empowered to pull up floors, under which it seemed probable that it might be discovered. Notwithstanding these extraordinary efforts, however, the requisite supply could scarcely be obtained, even at a monstrous price; and in case of war with Europe, would be utterly unattainable if the nation were not able to fall back upon their imports from India. Again, the Company's supply of raw silk, calicoes, indigo, and of numerous drugs used in the arts or in medicine, frequently gave our manufactures a considerable advantage over those of the Continent. In a defence which they laid before the Privy Council, on the subject of the introduction of silk, in answer to an attack of the Turkey Company, who claimed that business as their own exclusive right, they proved

[1] These were, of course, much lighter than are used for naval purposes at the present day.

that the silk manufactures of England had increased fourfold since they had begun the importation of raw silk.

With regard to throwing open the trade, Sir Josiah Child insists loudly upon the Company's vested interests, the disorder into which the trade under this system had fallen during the time of the Commonwealth, and the impossibility of private merchants supporting a fleet adequate for their protection, and for giving them weight and influence with the native princes, "for without forts, fleets, and soldiers, there would be no English trade in India." This it was, which rendered it necessary for the trade to be conducted by a single company. It had not yet occurred to the politicians of those days, that the security of our merchants in the distant regions of India should be guaranteed by the presence of a national fleet and army.

In 1683, the King again renewed their charter, confirming all former ones, and granting them the most ample powers for repressing interlopers, and whoever else might interfere with their trade. Soon afterwards a strong fleet, accompanied by one of the King's frigates, was despatched to the West side of Hindostan, where the Company's servants, in consequence of the injudicious conduct of Sir Josiah Child, Governor of Bombay, and the intrigues of interlopers, had got embroiled with the Mogul. The expedition, whatever might be the provocation, partook more of the nature of piracy than of war. A large number of native

craft, belonging to the Mahometan merchants of Surat, were seized by these licensed buccaneers, who considered them no unsubstantial equivalent for the disappointment which they experienced of never encountering a respectable foe, and for the consequent loss of the empty glories of a naval victory.

Interlopers and pirates from the West India islands still, however, harassed the Company, and engaged them in vexatious contests both at home and abroad. On the accession, therefore, of James II., a prince who was not only a friend and encourager of commerce, but affected to consider himself well-versed in its details, they seized an opportunity of obtaining a fresh confirmation of their charter with the most ample powers for establishing their complete supremacy in the East. By this they were empowered to make war, if requisite, upon the native princes; to appoint their own admirals and officers; to seize the vessels of interlopers; to coin money, and to use martial law in their ships and settlements.

During the reign of James, little occurred to disturb the peaceful current of their commerce. Fresh attempts were made to establish a trade with Japan, but without success; and the Company, having lost 50,000*l.* by their repeated exertions, resolved, for the present, to abandon any idea of commerce in this quarter. Bombay, from an unhealthy settlement, became, by clearing away the forests, and drainage, one of the most important cities of India, and contained a population of little less than 100,000 souls. The Company's trade was con-

sidered, too, in the most healthy condition. Davenant, inspector-general of the customs, in his "Discourse on Revenue and Trade," has left interesting calculations of their total imports and exports. He considers this commerce one of our most important national interests, and estimates its clear annual benefit to all people concerned, or, in fact, to the country at large, as not much less than 2,000,000*l.* However unimportant this may appear in our own time, it was considered in the seventeenth century a very splendid statement of the advantages of the trade.

The Revolution of 1688 introduced their monopoly to fresh dangers. Private traders, ambitious of participating in the success of the Company, and irritated at the royal support which it had hitherto enjoyed, eagerly seized every opportunity of exciting against it public prejudice. It had for some time been pretty generally admitted, that the trade could not be conducted with advantage to the country, except by the agency of some incorporated company. The exertions of private merchants were consequently now directed to obtaining a new company, and in 1691 they prevailed upon the House of Commons to address King William on the subject of the dissolution and remodelling of the old one. They entered into an association, subscribed large sums of money, and by their operations so excited the attention of the nation, that there was scarcely an individual who did not feel interested in the contest. They persuaded the woollen manufacturers of Gloucestershire to complain against the Company for exporting

fewer pieces of cloth than, as they thought, they ought to do! whilst the linendrapers were induced to complain that the quantity of Indian calicoes imported was not sufficient to meet the demand.

To these complaints it was replied, that they were the natural result of the commercial uncertainty and depression which had attended the Revolution, and that they were already being obviated by an increase in the exportation of woollen goods, and by the arrival of other ships with a sufficient stock of calicoes.

Meanwhile the King, in a message to the House of Commons, declared that it was the opinion of the Judges, that the dissolution of the Company could not be effected without a notice of three years, and that before the expiration of that period it would be illegal for any Company to commence their operations. The House, after several debates, prayed the King that the requisite notice should be given, and the Company dissolved; to which his Majesty, before proroguing Parliament, replied that he would consider their address.

Notwithstanding all this opposition, however, the Company found means to obtain, in 1693, a renewal of their rights for twenty-one years, with all the powers and privileges of their former charters, but subject to certain regulations. Among these we may notice a condition which had been inserted in almost every previous charter, that the King should be supplied with 500 tons of saltpetre, at 38*l.* 10*s.* per ton, in time of peace, and 45*l.* in time of war. It was, moreover,

provided (although the regulation was subsequently relaxed) that English merchandise, to the value of 100,000*l.*, should be annually exported.

The means by which this charter was really obtained are enveloped in mystery. The sums annually expended by the Company in special services, which usually amounted to 1,200*l.*, but in 1693 rose to 90,000*l.*, were most probably in some way or other connected with it. An account of the disposal of this immense sum of money was demanded of Sir Thomas Coke, the Governor, and of the principal members of the Company by the House of Commons, but without effect. There followed a succession of angry debates; Coke was sent to the Tower, and a bill passed for compelling him to make a discovery, whilst in the Upper House, the Duke of Leeds, the President of the Council, who undertook his defence, was himself impeached. The absence of a material witness, and the prorogation of Parliament, interrupted the proceedings, and they were never resumed.

The rise and speedy fall of the ill-starred Darien Company, or "Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies," for awhile diverted the attention of the mercantile world from the affairs of the Company. To compensate for this, the short, but vigorous war occasioned by the Revolution, and terminated by the treaties of Ryswick, materially interfered with their profits. In the course of eight years, during which the war raged, no less than 4,200 British merchant vessels are said to have fallen into the hands of the French men-of-war

and privateers, and among them several of the homeward-bound vessels of the Company. The Ministry were, moreover, most liberal in granting, in direct violation of their charter, licenses to private individuals to trade in India, and thereby still further injured their prosperity.

It was now that they began to feel the insufficiency of a royal charter, when destitute of a parliamentary confirmation. Private merchants were still thirsting for a participation in their trade, and grounded the merits of their cause upon this circumstance, which the progress of the age, and the ideas of constitutional government, which had been awakened at the late Revolution, had induced many to consider a grand and insuperable objection to their monopoly. Matters were in this position when the Government, in want of money, offered the Company a parliamentary confirmation of their privileges, on the condition of their advancing a large sum for the public service. Whilst, however, they held consultations, and hesitated, the separate traders advanced the requisite sums, on condition of being incorporated for the purpose of trading to the Indies. To this, parliamentary sanction was presently obtained, especially as by one of their regulations, it was provided that licenses should be granted to separate individuals, to trade on their own private account, and under certain restrictions, independently of the Company. In 1698, their charter was signed by the King, and they were permitted to commence operations immediately, although the old Company were clearly entitled to a

notice of three years, before any of their privileges could be withdrawn. They had, however, early perceived the prejudice to which their monopoly was subject, and the success which was likely to attend the application of the separate traders. Hence, in order to secure in any case their right of trading to India, they were themselves the largest subscribers to the New Stock. The new Company, although possessing neither forts, factories, or other accommodations necessary for their trade, began immediately to despatch vessels to India, and unsuccessfully attempted to renew commercial intercourse with Japan, an effort at trade with that empire which was probably the last made by this country. Ships were also equipped by the old Company as well as by separate traders, and there are said to have been at the same time no less than sixty vessels chartered for India.

The collision of all these jarring interests was inevitable. The trade fell into the utmost irregularity. In England, an undue exportation of bullion produced great mercantile depression, which a glut of Indian commodities did nothing to alleviate, but by their unreasonable cheapness, were ruinous to our native manufacturers. In the East, the evils of a depreciation of European merchandise were still further increased by the extortions and injustice, which, in consequence of the unprotected state of the trade, the native princes found themselves in a condition to inflict. All the efforts of the two Companies were now directed to their mutual destruction. Their animosities occupied the

attention of the nation at large, and of the two political parties into which the country was divided, the Tories were the supporters of the old, and the Whigs of the new Company. "All the miseries of the open trade in the latter part of Cromwell's government, were renewed upon a more extensive scale, and with increased virulence."

It was impossible that such a state of affairs could last long. In both Companies the majority of members, as must always be the case, cared little or nothing for the rights or principles of either party, and were simply intent upon a profitable investment for capital. After numerous negotiations an amalgamation of the two Companies accordingly took place, Parliament passing an Act that they should make a further loan to Government, at a fixed rate of interest. In 1708, the united Company was placed on the footing, which, with but little variation it occupied for more than a century, and in the succeeding year they paid their first dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. In the deed by which the old conveyed to the united Company all their fixed property, there is a list of their forts, factories, and settlements, which vividly illustrates the extensive nature and the various ramifications of their commerce.

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century they enjoyed a period of almost uninterrupted prosperity. Their dividends rapidly rose, averaging from 6 to 10 per cent. upon the paid-up capital. In India, the importance of their trade, their high character for commercial honesty, and an idea of their power and

naval resources, which was the more magnificent, as they were the more unknown, induced the Mogul again to guarantee and even to amplify their old privileges. At home, the regular and business-like method in which their transactions were managed, and the undeniable benefits which they conferred upon the country, induced the legislation on one occasion to grant them gratuitously a prolongation of their privileges. The little outcry which at this date was raised against their monopoly, may very probably be attributed to the judicious manner in which they weathered the commercial crisis, which succeeded the bursting of the South Sea scheme.

A second quarter of a century elapsed, in which the prosperous pursuit and the regular routine of legitimate commerce furnish but few salient points for the remarks of the historian. A plan for converting the Company from a joint-stock into a regulated Company, under the idea (probably a just one) that a number of independent partners would materially increase both the exports and imports of India, besides employing a much larger amount of seamen and shipping was devised, but without much judgment, by a numerous association of the merchants of Liverpool, Bristol, and London. The projectors of the scheme do not appear ever to have been in a position to embody their views. The only result of their agitation was the Company's being obliged to pay to the Exchequer, not much less than one million sterling for the prolongation of their monopoly for the next thirty-three years.

The history of the succeeding confirmations of their charter, down to the times of Fox and Pitt, when their territorial possessions usurped the interest, if not the importance of their commerce, would be as tedious to the reader to peruse as it would be wearisome to the writer to compose. It would consist of a dry, uninteresting detail of the financial schemes, of the propositions and counter-propositions of the Ministers of the country on the one side, and the Directors of the Company on the other. The invariable result may, however, be stated in a few words. The Company, some years, often many years, before the expiration of its charter, paid in different ways, according to the wants of the Ministry or the exigencies of the country, large sums for its renewal.

The *total* amount of money which in this manner was disbursed by the Company for the enjoyment of their monopoly, and the privilege of governing those Oriental possessions, which had been added to the territories of this country, in general, by the arms of their own soldiers, and always at their own expense, is something incredible. At a very moderate calculation, no less than 30,000,000*l.* sterling were advanced to the country in the eighteenth century, the major part having been advanced to relieve the Government from the most pressing exigencies. We may hazard the remark, that to the opportune assistance thus afforded, may frequently be attributed the increasing political importance of this country.

It was during this period that the Company laid the

foundation of their territorial grandeur, and from merchants became princes. It does not form a part of our subject to relate in detail the series of military and political events by which the empire of the English was established in India. Their chief cause was the instability and uncertainty of the native governments, which could afford no sufficient guarantee for the safety of the lives and property of their own subjects, much less for those of a few foreigners, whose wealth was obvious, whose country was distant, and whose operations frequently rendered them unpopular. The Company, in consequence, had long been obliged, for the proper defence of their trade, to support a respectable fleet in the Indian Ocean, and to secure their factories with fortifications and troops. The force of circumstances over which they had no control, the unauthorized ambition of their agents, and above all the interference of the French in the politics of Bengal and the Deccan, induced them at first involuntarily, and after their first successes readily, to employ the powers, which they possessed, for their own advantage. The splendid and dazzling victories of Clive, which were absolutely essential to the very existence of English trade and English influence in India, placed at their feet a populous and fertile country, whose government the Great Mogul was eager that they should administer, and the advantages of which it would have been madness to refuse. Their ambition and avarice have been frequently and loudly condemned; and the errors and corruption of their subsequent government have often deserved, and never failed in

obtaining, their liberal due of blame and vituperation, but the unbiassed observer of the first beginnings of their dominion will rather wonder at their moderation than decry their ambition. He will wonder at the nice, yea, possibly too strict, idea of justice which still induces them to pay to the representatives of those princes whose dominions they possess, more than one half of the revenues of the country; and this, too, although the majority of such princes had no further right to the dominions from which they were expelled than the Company themselves. The generality held out to the last extremity, were unconditionally vanquished, and yet have received from an association of merchants such terms as, we may venture to assert, they would never have received from the generosity of any monarch of ancient or modern times. Of the forty millions of revenue, at present derived from the country, twenty millions are still being paid to the representatives of the native princes, generously and honourably it may be, but with what national advantage either to this country or to India we forbear to inquire, and will confine ourselves to their commercial history.

In the year immediately succeeding their first territorial acquisitions, their stock attained the unprecedented height of 263. The dividends suddenly rose from six to ten per cent., and it was confidently expected that in a few years this might reach fifty per cent., and the stock itself be worth 900*l.*, or even 1,000*l.* The following year a dividend of 12½ per cent., the *largest ever made*, was actually declared. The interference of Par-

liament, however, put a stop to the golden dreams of the Stock Exchange. The Company's territories were pronounced to be property of the Crown, and dividends above ten per cent. were forbidden. Infinite were the arguments alleged for the constitutionality or unconstitutionality, the justice or injustice of this act. The Ministry asserted that all conquests made by subjects, even at their own expense, belonged to the Crown. The advocates of the Company rejoined, that this was a new and unheard-of claim; that the Company had repeatedly paid large sums to Government for the Parliamentary renewal of their charters, and had an undoubted right to every advantage which they could possibly obtain consistent with the powers granted by such charters; that their possessions in India were not an absolute property, but a farm granted to them by the Great Mogul, according to the constitution of his empire, and subject to an annual rent; that when the French demanded the restoration of the territories taken from their own East India Company, the British Ministry replied that every dispute relative to those territorial acquisitions made in Asia by the English East India Company must be settled by that Company, "the Crown of England having no right to interfere in what is allowed to be the legal and exclusive property of a body corporate, belonging to the English nation;" lastly, that such a seizure of private property would render insecure every possession which was of sufficient magnitude to attract the attention of the Ministry or the cupidity of the nation.

The Company, owing to its importance and position, was an anomaly to which the history of the world offered no parallel. Neither the law of nations, nor the customs of England, furnished any precedent by which men could regulate their opinions in reference to such an institution. Parliament consequently decided that whatever might be the justice or injustice of the measure, on the score of public expediency and sound policy, there could be no question that the territorial possessions of the East India Company should, and must, belong to the country in general.

Although these knotty questions were the subject of violent discussion, the regularity of the trade experienced no interruption therefrom, but fresh articles of Oriental produce began to be introduced. Among these *tea* occupied a conspicuous position. The consumption of this herb, both in this country and on the Continent, had increased to an unparalleled extent, and promised to become a most lucrative branch of their commerce, when a monstrous duty of 200 per cent., afterwards reduced to a duty which fluctuated from 128 to 64 per cent. on the nett cost, was imposed. Such a premium upon contraband trade immediately covered our coasts with swarms of smugglers, and filled every port with troops of desperate characters, to whom a life of danger and excitement, with the chance of occasional rich prizes, was more attractive than the steady pursuits of industry. The quantity of tea which, under this *régime*, was either smuggled or manufactured from the leaves of the sloe, ash, or other trees, was incalculable.

The continuance of the system for more than sixty years, *i.e.*, from 1722 to 1784, when the duty was reduced to 12½ per cent. on the sale price, produced the most frightful evils. The foreign East India Companies, and especially the Danish, imported in nine years 118,000,000 lbs., more than twice the amount imported by our own country, whilst the consumption upon the Continent was barely 5,500,000 lbs., the remaining 113,000,000 lbs. were smuggled into England. Nor was this all: numerous Eastern commodities, such as wrought silks, nankeens, &c., with which the foreign Companies would otherwise never have meddled, were imported for the sake of running them in upon the British shores along with tea, the main staple of this illicit traffic. By these means the trade of our own Company was immensely damaged; our naval resources crippled; the minds of our seamen corrupted; our national revenue defrauded; the expenses of collecting and protecting it enormously increased; great encouragement given to counterfeiting and adulterating an article of consumption, on the pure nature of which the health of millions were depending; lastly, there was produced a general demoralization of the character of all engaged in its sale. On the other hand, the trade of foreign Companies was vastly increased; the maritime power of the Continental states greatly strengthened; and in this school of smuggling, in which so much courage and cool deliberation were requisite, there was reared a race of seamen, who afterwards proved our most formidable

rivals. Such were the baneful effects resulting from a long continuance of a too high tariff.

The indirect connection which existed between this excessive duty on tea and the disruption of our American colonies, from the vast influence upon the trade and civilization of the world, which has thence arisen, deserves a passing notice.

In 1773, in consequence of the great amount of illicit importation of tea, the Company were burdened with a heavy stock which was daily decreasing in value, and for disposing of which there seemed little opportunity. The Ministry, to relieve them from this difficulty, obtained an Act, allowing them to export their teas free of duty to any of the British colonies. It was expected that the Company would export large quantities to America, and the Government still gain a small revenue thereon, inasmuch as tea was one of the commodities upon which, when the duties on other articles in America were repealed, Parliament had retained a small royalty as a mark of supremacy. As such, it was viewed by the colonists as a badge of slavery, and resolutions for the non-consumption of tea were passed throughout all the colonies. Although the pecuniary prospects of the colonists were at this period by no means good, many of the principal proprietors strongly objected to the exportation of tea on the Company's own account, as a measure totally at variance with the practice of their commerce. They asserted that it was repugnant to the fundamental principles of their charter; for by this they were incorporated for the

purpose of trading, not to America, but between this country and the East Indies:—that a steady perseverance in one course of commerce had hitherto proved successful, and was infinitely preferable to precarious adventures:—that the nature of the American trade was such that, supposing the tea landed, and sold to the greatest profit, yet still it would be impossible to procure a remittance for the value in cash or bills of exchange:—that the Company's returns would be made in produce:—that their sales would have to include a variety of articles, in estimating the value of which they were liable to ruinous miscalculation and every species of deception:—that in the purchase and sale, the supply and demand, of such articles as peltries, salt-fish, train-oil, spermaceti candles, lumber, flour, flax-seed, tobacco, tar, pitch, turpentine, and rice, they had neither had experience, nor possessed any of the requisite data: lastly, that such trade would materially interfere with that of established American merchants, and would subject the Company to bitter and well-merited complaints. Notwithstanding these representations, the cautious members were out-voted, and vessels were despatched to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston.

So large an arrival of this obnoxious article produced the utmost excitement. It was found impossible to land it; whilst the governors and officers of the customs forbade the captains of the vessels from conveying it back to England. This state of suspense continued for some time, when a party of men, disguised as

Mohawk Indians, boarded during the night the vessels lying at Boston, and threw overboard the whole of the cargo of tea, without doing any further injury either to the seamen or the ships. The same occurred at Charleston; whilst neither at New York nor Philadelphia was it possible to effect any sales. For the loss thus experienced no compensation was ever obtained by the Company; but their unfortunate consignment of tea exercised, as is well known, no inconsiderable effect in bringing to a crisis the differences between this country and her colonies.

That event produced the following change in the Company's commercial policy. *Indigo* is an article which from the earliest times has been considered, as its name indicates, a production of India. During the first century of their monopoly, it constituted a considerable item in their imports; but its introduction was afterwards discouraged in order to avoid competition with British colonists in the West Indies and the Southern States of North America. When, however, the former had abandoned its cultivation, and the latter had separated themselves from the mother country, every effort was made for the revival of this neglected branch of agriculture among the Company's vassals in India. After large sacrifices, which may probably be estimated at more than 100,000*l.* sterling, its cultivation was resumed, and gave employment to a large amount of capital. Besides materially adding to the Company's trade and revenue, it has had the effect of introducing into the Peninsula a numerous and influential body of resident

Europeans, who have, on the whole, exercised a most beneficial influence upon the feelings and manners of large masses of the natives, with whom their occupation brings them into constant contact. The trade in indigo, which in the middle of the eighteenth century had sunk to a mere nothing, has been since 1790 gradually increasing. The natural facilities of the soil, combined with the application of European methods to its manufacture, have again rendered indigo what it was in ancient times, the peculiar and one of the most important branches of Indian commerce.

In 1783, Fox introduced his celebrated bill for regulating the affairs of the Company. Whilst preserving their commercial privileges, and leaving intact the question of their territorial rights, he proposed to vest the whole administration not only of their territorial possessions, but even of their commercial affairs, in the hands of seven noblemen and gentlemen, as principal Directors, to be nominated by the Crown, assisted by nine others, who were to be proprietors of East India Stock. The numerous minor heads of the bill had chiefly reference to those abuses which had arisen from the altered condition of the Company, and contained little that was objectionable. Long and exciting discussions occurred, from which may be gleaned a very accurate notion of the character and prospects of the Company at this period. Conspicuous among the opponents of the bill was William Pitt, by whose influence it was ultimately rejected, but not before it had occasioned a change of ministry and a dissolution of Parliament, and had

attracted a larger amount of public attention than any other bill, which was not finally passed. The ensuing year, Pitt, who was himself Premier, introduced and passed a fresh bill, which, while leaving the rights of the Company pretty much as they were, established a Board of Commissioners for superintending the civil and military government and revenues of their territorial possessions, and exercising a general control over all the affairs of the Company. The natural result of this measure was, in course of time, indirectly to confer on the Board of Control nearly all those powers which were contemplated by Fox's measure, but possessing this great superiority, that it left the management of the commercial affairs of the Company in the hands of persons acquainted with business. Their trade in consequence was still conducted with success.

By this bill the privileges and monopoly of the Company were extended to a period of thirty years, although every effort was made by the merchants of Liverpool to obtain an open trade. The Company, however, had now lost their essentially mercantile character. The vast interests involved, the position in which they stood with regard to the nation, and the obligation they were under of never dividing more than a certain per centage, induced the Directors to make strenuous exertions to foster the trade in those particulars, which they thought conducive to the advantages either of this country or of India.

Although private trade was still forbidden, those who were desirous of exporting English goods to India

on their own account were allowed to forward them in the Company's vessels at a reasonable freight. They extended the quantity of shipping, devoted to such trade, much beyond what was required by their charter, and almost annually increased the privileges, which they offered to independent merchants, until ultimately they were allowed to ship even considerable quantities of foreign goods. Whilst to increase the trade of India itself, and to add stability to our connections with America and our European allies, the subjects of all states in amity with us were, under certain conditions, allowed to trade thither.

In 1793, in conjunction with Government, they were at the expense of sending to China Lord Macartney as Ambassador; and though the embassy was far from fulfilling the sanguine expectation of those engaged in commerce with that empire, it contributed to the steadiness and security of the Company's trade at Canton.

With the most patriotic views they made the same exertions to increase the silk trade of India which they had made for the cultivation of indigo. For ten years their sales of silk were conducted at a loss, and they sacrificed no less than 800,000*l.* in laying the foundation of this trade. There can be little doubt that it would have answered their expectations, and proved remarkably profitable, if the inventions of Arkwright and others had not rendered it possible to produce cotton goods so cheap, and at the same time so elegant, that in very many cases they superseded silk for female attire.

The introduction into this country of *sunn*, a species of hemp which grows abundantly in many districts of Bengal and in the vicinity of Bombay, is due to their public spirit. It was at first sold, without any regard to immediate advantage, for two-thirds the price of Russian hemp. They gave bales of it to rope-makers, and got it spun into every species of cable, sail-cloth, and cordage; and went to considerable expense upon making experiments to determine its strength, and the best and most economical method of manufacturing it. Although these efforts were not immediately crowned with success, they were the means of introducing this article into England, and of rendering this country, if need be, independent of foreigners for a raw material of prime necessity.

The exportation of tin from England to China is another branch of commerce which we owe to the efforts of the Company. This trade the Dutch had hitherto managed by a settlement in the island of Sumatra. In 1789, however, the Company began to import Cornish tin to China, where its superior quality soon rendered it in great demand. By this means, in addition to materially benefitting the proprietors of tin mines in the West of England, and giving activity to the Company's trade in tea, a considerable saving was made in the exportation of silver, inasmuch as tin is an article which circulates not only in China, but also in the East Indies, with a freedom little inferior to that of bullion.

The native commerce of India has been as vigorous

and flourishing in modern as in ancient times. Whilst the Company themselves monopolized the trade between the East and West, they permitted their civil servants to engage their capital in that between different parts of the East, and in this lucrative traffic were obtained the majority of those dazzling fortunes which, during the last century, gave rise to as false an idea of the opulence of India, as was prevalent in more remote ages. In fact, it was the very poverty of the country, furnishing but a scanty supply of merchants with sufficient capital to conduct a coasting trade, which insured to the few engaged in it such magnificent profits. The direction and character of this commerce, usually called "the country trade," was pretty much the same as in ancient times. It extends as far west as the Red Sea, as far east as China and Manila, and the merchants engaged in it, in addition to Europeans, are chiefly those of Arabia, Persia, Armenia, and the Oriental Islands, and some of them do business to an extent which is scarcely credible. The cargoes, with a small assortment of European commodities, consist for the most part of the productions and manufactures of India. Indigo is bought largely by the Arabian merchants: pepper, cotton, and opium are shipped in vast quantities for China: the Eastern Archipelago is supplied from Coromandel with cotton fabrics and a variety of objects for domestic use; whilst rice and other articles of food are transported to different regions, according to the deficiencies occasioned by unseasonable weather or other causes.

From the passing of Pitt's Act until the trade was finally thrown open, the political administration of the Company, which gradually became subservient to, and finally a portion of, the general government of the British Empire, engrossed much more than her commerce the attention of the country. Yet it was probably to the possession of our Oriental trade that, in no small degree, we owe our national independence—the enjoyment of our own laws, unshackled by foreign despotism —that, at the commencement of the present century, we were enabled to afford almost every nation on the Continent the means of retaining their independence, and of shaking off the blighting yoke of a power, whose ambitious designs have been without a parallel in, perhaps, any age. There was one little Indian episode in the great European struggle against Napoleon, which demands our attention.

The French had, since their expulsion by the Company from India, and the consequent decline of their naval consideration dependent thereupon, cast an envious eye upon our Oriental possessions. Whether the Egyptian expedition was undertaken with the view of attacking these, or (what was alleged) for the purposes of colonization, or merely to find occupation for the soldiery, and employment for the public mind, cannot now be positively ascertained. The well-known ideas of Napoleon on this subject scarcely permit us to doubt, that its ultimate object was to draw the Indian trade into its old channel, up the Red Sea, across the desert to Alexandria, and thence to the countries along

the Mediteranean Sea, which by future conquests it was proposed to convert into little less than a "French Lake." Be this as it may, such was the general idea concerning it, and we notice it for the circumstance of its having given rise to a singular act of direct interference by the Company in the politics of Europe.

In 1801, an expedition under the command of Sir Ralph Abercrombie was sent by this country to dislodge the French from Egypt. Owing to the flight of Napoleon, the assassination of Kleber, who succeeded him, and the disorganization of the army, which resulted from the quarrels of General Menou with his officers, and especially with General Regnier, this was found an object of much less difficulty than was anticipated. During the preparations for it, however, it was proposed to send troops from India, and attack the French on the side of the Red Sea. Although the Company had but just brought to conclusion two expensive campaigns, namely, those against Scindiah and Tippoo, and though they were threatened by a new Mahratta war, yet were they in such flourishing circumstances, that they managed to send Sir David Baird, with little less than 10,000 troops, splendidly equipped, and liberally supplied with artillery, from their own arsenals and magazines.

The French, as we have said, evacuated Egypt before these troops arrived at the scene of action, and they had, in consequence, no opportunity of displaying their prowess. The expedition, however, contributed vastly to raise our reputation wherever it was heard

or understood. It impressed the nations of Europe with a high sense of the military power and energy of England. It demonstrated to every age the innate martial vigour which exists in a commercial nation, but which is ordinarily so enveloped in the blessings of peace, that it is never revealed except in startling emergencies.

It would be difficult to select other instances in which the Company meddled directly in the politics of Europe. Their affairs, it is true, often exercised the attention of the legislature, and gave a character to the leading opinions of the rival parties of the state, but their grand military institutions of the East, their armies and artillery, were never called home, and employed against the European enemies of their country. They affected our relations with Europe in another less direct, but more efficacious manner. It was not so much by the valour of her armies, conspicuous as that was, or by the skill of her generals, the most illustrious of any age, or by the diplomacy of her statesmen, that England distinguished herself in the general war at the commencement of the nineteenth century, as by the extent of her resources and her boundless credit. That credit, those resources, were founded upon her commercial prosperity; and that prosperity was upheld, we hesitate not to say, more by her commerce with India than by her colonies or any other cause.

The conquests of the Company, too, were almost invariably attended with the capture of immense booty, or the payment of myriads of rupees by the vanquished

Princes. This wealth found its way into England, and either directly or indirectly contributed to the revenue of the state. In addition to this, our Government in India was so lax, that by oppression or forced presents, or the thousand other methods by which Oriental despots squeeze money from their inferiors, numbers of Englishmen amassed princely fortunes. These they, in general, brought home to enjoy. In this way, vile though the sourcemight be, and injurious as its results undoubtedly were upon the future prosperity of India, immense treasure was annually poured into this country and, in one shape or other, augmented the public revenue.

By all these various methods, independently of her colonial possessions in the West and her trade to America, which was but little affected by the hostility of Continental states, she became the great moneyed power of Europe. Money is, to a proverb, the "sinews of war." With this, no less than her arms, she liberated Europe from the French autocrat. From the most paltry German principality to the Czar himself, every court in Europe, from Lisbon to Stockholm, was the thankful recipient of subsidies, but few of which were ever repaid. Those whose liberty she did not with her own arms secure, she paid to fight their own battles, to gain their own freedom. She paid them with the revenues of her commerce and the plunder of Indian monarchs. Strange thought! The hoards, which Eastern despots had wrested from their oppressed subjects, supplied the nations of the West with freedom and independence.

Lastly, during the long peace which has followed our

victory at Waterloo, our Indian commerce has still further increased; and though not equal to our trade with the Western hemisphere either in magnitude or lucrativeness, it has done much to raise the country to her present state of affluence. The East India Company are no longer merchants: their monopoly is gone. By private enterprise and private capital is the trade of India now transacted. It flows, however, in its old channel. England is still its European emporium—still participates in its golden harvests. The income of the Company is now derived from other sources—from her territorial possessions. By a series of victories, as brilliant as they have been important, it now either actually possesses, or holds subject to its influence, the whole of the vast peninsula of India. From Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, from the Ganges to the Indus, with the exception of one or two paltry settlements, everything is subject to their decrees. Throughout the whole Eastern Archipelago their forts and vessels of war command every island and every important political or commercial position. Throughout the kingdoms of Burmah, Pegu, Siam, and China, our influence is directly felt. Cashmere and the regions of Afghanistan, to the borders of Persia itself, acknowledge our supremacy. We hold a dominion, in comparison with which the loose rule of Timur and his descendants sinks into insignificance.

The great remoteness of this territory from the seat of government has, it is true, often allowed of many abuses, but, on the whole, we exercise our rule for the

benefit of our subjects. Under the Company, as masters, India has risen to a pitch of prosperity which she never enjoyed under the best of her Mahometan monarchs. Though our manufacturers have superseded the rude fabrics of the native loom, and in consequence have, in some districts, produced partial distress, yet we have made ample atonement for it by developing the natural wealth of the country, and encouraging her commerce and agriculture. Her inhabitants sow their seed and reap their harvests in security, no longer harassed by marauding squadrons of Pindarrees or freebooting Mahrattas.

Under our peaceful sway an empire, as powerful as it is extensive, is gradually becoming consolidated. How mightily this is confirming the strength of our country, how vast are the reciprocal advantages of such a connection, it is more easy to imagine than describe.

What, too, will be its final effects in the East? Whether India will be severed from the sovereign country or remain its mighty subject; whether it will be the means of making the active civilization of Europe supersede the stationary apathetic refinement of the Hindoo; or itself yield to the indolent effects of the clime, we leave for time to unfold. When, however, we consider the immense colonial efforts which the Saxon race is making in neighbouring islands in the Pacific; when we consider the vast stimulus which has been given to their commercial

enterprise and activity by the recent discovery of immense quantities of the precious metals in Australia, we cannot doubt that a glorious future is in store for our *possessions* in the East.

CHAPTER XIII.

COMMERCE OF THE FRENCH WITH INDIA.

THERE are only three European nations, which have carried on extensive commerce with India by way of the Cape. These are the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English. Others, however, have formed their India Companies, established foreign factories, and partaken in some degree of that opulent traffic. Foremost among these, but at a considerable distance behind the three nations above mentioned, are the *French*. Their mercantile transactions we will first consider.

Throughout the fifteenth century the inhabitants of that portion of the Continent, which now constitutes France, were probably the most wealthy people in Europe, and consumed a very large proportion of the spices, silks, and other Oriental commodities which the Venetians imported from Syria and Egypt. Soon after the Portuguese had diverted the course of Eastern commerce, the merchants of Normandy were eager to participate in the new trade. As early as 1503, those of Rouen are said to have fitted out a squadron, which doubled the Cape, but was deterred

from proceeding further by the storms, which were encountered in the Indian Ocean. Dieppe, Havre, and St. Malo in turn sent out expeditions to India, but it was not until 1611, that any company incorporated under Royal Charter engaged in this trade; and even then it was not prosecuted with vigour. A few profitable voyages were made at intervals. Madagascar, which was supposed to contain valuable mines of gold and silver, was occupied, and several of its harbours defended by French fortifications. Notwithstanding this, and the establishment of a factory at Surat, their trade, which was never very active, languished, and before 1664 was nearly annihilated. In that year, however, it received a fresh impulse. The famous Company of the East Indies was formed under the auspices of the illustrious Colbert.

That great Minister was eager that his country should rival the Dutch and the English in commerce and manufactures, which he clearly perceived were the great pillars of political grandeur and national prosperity. Unparalleled exertions were made to support the new Company. A monopoly of the India trade was granted for the long period of half a century. The nobles were induced to invest money in its funds by the assurance that such trade should be no derogation from their dignity. Honours and hereditary titles were promised to those, who should distinguish themselves in advancing its prosperity. Foreigners subscribing 20,000 livres were declared naturalized; officers of the army subscribing the same sum were

permitted to absent themselves from their regiments without detriment to their pay or promotion. The King himself engaged to protect the Company's establishments; to send ambassadors to the princes of India; to remit half the duties on the goods which they imported; to foster by every means their operations; and lastly, to lend them one-fifth of the sum, necessary for the first three voyages, and to allow the money to remain in their hands ten years without interest.

Such was the flattering encouragement which they received. "It may be observed, however," says an eminent writer on commerce, "that the nation, whose merchants stood in need of royal pecuniary assistance, for carrying on their trade, was not arrived at the maturity of opulence, commercial knowledge and commercial energy, necessary for establishing and conducting an East India trade upon a magnificent scale."

The pretensions of the new Company were never fulfilled. Their vast designs ended in a temporary occupation of Madagascar, and the establishment of a few factories at Surat, and other places on the western coast of India, many of which they evacuated without paying their debts. Pondicherry, on the coast of Coromandel, was the only flourishing settlement which they possessed, and its prosperity was rather due to the enterprise of Monsieur Martin, a private individual, than to any considerable exertions of the Company in its behalf.

In Europe the Company's affairs were managed with reckless extravagance, though the profits which arose from their mercantile transactions were far from magni-

ficent. The directors began the improvident system of paying dividends out of the original capital: instead of acting with prudence, and compensating for the deficiency of their revenue by increased economy, they affected to imitate the splendour of their sovereign in schemes of ostentation and vastness of design. Civil, as well as foreign, wars accelerated their ruin. French privateers brought into French ports Dutch and English vessels, freighted with East India commodities. As prize-goods must be sold at whatever price they will fetch, the glut reduced their value to a mere nothing; and the Company were obliged either to sell their merchandise, obtained in the legitimate course of trade, at a heavy loss, or, what was still worse, not sell it at all.

By royal interference, by a new charter, and by striking out all who had *not* paid at least 80 per cent. of their subscription—a measure as extraordinary as it was unjust—the Company were, in 1684 (only twenty-four years after their incorporation), with difficulty preserved from ruin.

Henceforth, their history is but a painful and monotonous recital of similar transactions. By wasteful expenditure, by ignorance of the true principles of commerce, or want of enterprise, they come to the verge of insolvency. Government interferes to prop up their declining credit with advances of money or fresh privileges. They are inspired with new energy; a few fortunate voyages are made; their dividends, however, fall short of public expectation: languor and inactivity

are followed by pecuniary distress, and they are on the brink of destruction, when the State again comes forward to their succour. Such, for many years, was the history of the India Company of France; a company, whose success would have been vastly different, if its affairs, instead of being conducted by statesmen, financiers, and courtiers, had been entrusted to the management of merchants, practically acquainted with the commerce of the Indian seas.

Like all the other foreign trading companies of France, it was ultimately merged in the most extraordinary association for financial, political, and commercial purposes that ever existed. It was absorbed in the Mississippi Company of John Law, and shared the misfortunes of that ill-fated scheme. It emerged, however, less scathed than might have been expected; and the King for some time allowed the shareholders to manage the trade themselves. It was at this period that the successes in India of Dumas and La Bourdonnais, but especially the brilliant campaigns of Dupleix and Bussy, produced a temporary prosperity, which was, however, soon reversed, in the East by the defeats of Lally, and at home by the interference of Government. In 1770, all their property and vessels, which amounted to about thirty, of from 900 to 1,200 tons burden, were made over to the King; and, soon afterwards, their monopoly of the India trade was abolished.

Prevented by the English from any considerable traffic with India itself, the French merchants now turned their attention to the shores of Africa. They

engaged extensively in the slave trade; and, within a few years, are said to have imported into St. Domingo alone no less than 20,000 slaves—a measure, as is well known, subsequently fraught with the most tragic consequences. Before the downfall of the Bourbons, another company was, it is true, formed. Its trade, however, was never very extensive, and it scarcely survived its incorporation.

Thus have we briefly sketched the varying fortunes of a commerce, which owed almost its existence to forced cultivation. Such being the case; we cannot expect its effects upon France to have been very marked. It enriched a few of the merchants of Dieppe, Havre, St. Malo, Nantes, Rochelle, and Bordeaux. It raised into consequence L'Orient, Quimper, and Oleron, which were for some time its French depôts. It colonized the isles of Bourbon and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. It made Pondicherry for a few years the most important city in India. The successes of its generals occupied for a short time the attention of Europe; but though it subsisted for nearly two centuries, neither by its conquests nor the profits of its trade, can it be said to have appreciably affected the social and political condition of the country, in which it was conducted.

In short, penury of capital—incompetent directors—want of commercial knowledge—incessant changes—too frequent interference of Government — grand schemes planned and commenced, but for lack of perseverance never accomplished—were circumstances

which hindered its success; and concurred with the political events of the times to render the magnificent commerce of the Indies absolutely useless to the French nation.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HISTORY OF THE OSTEND EAST INDIA COMPANY.

We have seen that no sooner had the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands emancipated themselves from Spanish thraldom, than they became the focus of the capital and trade of the North. Thither, for the sake of liberty, civil, religious, and commercial, flocked the wealthy and industrious Protestants from the ten remaining provinces, which, in consequence, began rapidly to decay. Their towns, once hives of industry, experienced, with the loss of their manufacturers, desertion and depopulation; and even Antwerp itself was no longer the resort of merchants and shipping—the grand emporium of the Netherlands. Under the Spanish monarchy, the exertions to remedy this state of mercantile depression were neither vigorous nor effectual, and were at last totally annihilated by that article in the Treaty of Munster, by which the Dutch practically forbade the Spaniards, or their subjects, to trade to India.

When, however, in 1713, the Southern Netherlands fell under the house of Austria, attempts were at length

made to recover their Oriental trade. Vessels were equipped, and, with imperial licenses, commenced a traffic with India and China. The Dutch, however, viewed with jealousy this invasion of their commercial domain. They contended that the inhabitants of the Netherlands could claim no further rights by passing from the dominion of Spain to that of the Emperor, than they enjoyed by the treaty of Munster, as subjects of Spain; that, as far as commerce was concerned, the conditions of that treaty had been subsequently confirmed by the Barrier Treaty—a treaty, whose stipulations had been expressly guaranteed by the Emperor himself, at a time when he was actually sovereign of the Netherlands; lastly, they represented that it was monstrous ingratitude that the Emperor, who had obtained possession of those provinces by their assistance, should permit the establishment of a trade so detrimental to the interests of their republic.

Little or no notice was taken of these remonstrances. A profitable commerce was carried on, chiefly from the port of Ostend, and conducted partly by Flemings, but principally by British and Dutch subjects, who were allured by extravagant pay to employ their talents and knowledge of the India trade to the prejudice of their respective countries. In England this evil was repressed by several Acts of the Legislature, rigorously enforcing the penalties formerly enacted against British subjects visiting India in the service of foreigners, and prohibiting them from being in any way concerned in carrying on East India trade from the Spanish Netherlands. Whilst

both the Dutch and English East India Companies seized without hesitation whatever vessels, belonging to their rivals, they chanced to meet in the Eastern Ocean, and replied to the remonstrances of the Emperor by counter-remonstrances of their own.

Either in defiance, or from neglect, of these measures the Emperor persisted in his design of establishing an Oriental commerce, and in 1722 was enrolled the famous "*Ostend East India Company*," under the sanction of a charter whose extravagant munificence partook more of the barbarous age of Pope Eugenius IV., who bestowed three-fourths of the world upon the Portuguese, than of the sober and calculating spirit of the eighteenth century. With such an expectation of success were these operations conducted, that the whole of the shares were taken up within twenty-four hours from the opening of the books, and a month afterwards were at 15 or even 20 per cent. premium. Under the guidance of English and Dutch agents, who had been enticed from the service of the older companies, several prosperous voyages were made to India and China; and as, during the three first years the Company was exempted from all duties upon their imports and exports, their dividends were considerable, attaining an average of more than 11 per cent. At this period a close alliance, which was entered into between the Emperor and the King of Spain, by which the Contracting Powers allowed to each other's subjects the free use of their ports, appeared to place the affairs of the Company on a secure foundation,

by providing them with harbours for trade and refreshment in the Spanish possessions in the Indies. The English and Dutch, however, who had a common interest in expelling from the East all competitors, combined for their destruction. Their settlements were destroyed; their factories plundered; their vessels confiscated, and the remonstrances of the Emperor invariably neglected. Under such a system no commerce could flourish, and their affairs were already in a state of disorganization, when, in consequence of the threatening attitude of the naval powers, the Emperor, in 1727, judged it expedient to suspend their charter. A few years later, at the request of the English and Dutch, who made this a condition of their support of the Pragmatic Sanction, the purport of which was to secure to his daughter Maria Theresa the succession to his dominions, the Emperor was induced to cancel it altogether.

It was next attempted to establish the same trade at Trieste and Fiume, ports which for many ages had belonged to the Austrian empire, and were consequently not subject to the same objections as Ostend and the ports of the Netherlands. Neither of these places, however, possessed harbours deemed sufficiently commodious for vessels of large tonnage, whilst the impediments to their improvement were found to be insurmountable. Under these circumstances, the Austrians were compelled for the present to relinquish all attempts at Oriental commerce.

Fifty years afterwards, however, an individual, by

name Bolts, who had been in the service of the English East India Company, and incurred their displeasure, proposed to the Empress Maria Theresa, the establishment of another East India Company at Trieste. Armed with an imperial charter, and with another obtained from the King of Tuscany, he proceeded, in conjunction with a company of merchants at Antwerp, to equip several vessels. But either in consequence of his own mismanagement, or the treachery of his partners, the enterprise failed, and he was himself reduced to considerable distress.

The prominence, which has been given to these abortive endeavours to obtain a share in the India trade is justified partly by the general attention which the Ostend Company excited among the politicians of the day, but especially by the consideration that in case of success they would have drawn a considerable portion of the trade into the same European channels, through which it flowed in the palmy days of Venice and Genoa. They are curious too as showing that the hope was still cherished of re-establishing the connection, which existed in bygone days between the commercial communities of Italy and the Netherlands.

Ostend is the port of Bruges, with which it communicates by means of a canal. It was by way of Bruges, that Venice in the middle ages supplied the north-western parts of Europe with Oriental commodities; it was by way of Trieste and Ragusa, that she poured her merchandise into Augsburg, the grand emporium of the inland trade of Germany.

Supposing the Ostend Company had fulfilled the expectations which were formed concerning it, we should have seen the unusual sight of a commerce deserting its channel for two centuries, and again returning to it. The cities of Central Germany might have regained the mercantile importance, which they possessed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the Emperor of Austria would have acquired an immense revenue from commerce, and become as powerful in maritime, as he is in military resources.

What effect this might have had upon the politics of Europe — how it would have opened out the natural treasures of Germany—what beneficial influence it might have exerted upon the social and political condition of Central Europe—what a magnificent power, with its parts indissolubly connected by the peaceful bands of commerce, might have arisen, instead of the present loosely connected confederacy, it were now, since Providence willed it otherwise, a bootless task to inquire.

CHAPTER XV.

THE COMMERCE OF THE SWEDES WITH INDIA.

ALTHOUGH the Swedes have long been distinguished for their perseverance and energy, the character and northerly position of their country have always precluded great commercial activity. An inconsiderable population, sparsely scattered over cold regions, whose most important harbours are for several months annually closed by the rigours of an almost Arctic winter, render trade with distant countries all but impossible. The importance of such commerce, however, has been overlooked, neither by the people nor their monarchs. Gustavus Adolphus was only prevented by his constant wars from giving effect to the operations of a Company, which he had established for trading to Africa, Asia, America, and Magellanica. In the reign of his learned and eccentric daughter Christina, colonies were founded in America, which after an accession of Saxon blood lost their primitive appellation of New Sweden, and now constitute the active little State of New Jersey. The reign of Charles XII. was doubtless illustrious for its victories, but conduced little, if at all, to the permanent prosperity of his people. Under his successors, Ulrica and her husband Frederic, the arts of peace revived, and the citizens of Stockholm and Gottenburg were

already becoming possessed of wealth and commercial enterprise, when an unusually favourable opportunity occurred for engaging in the India trade.

This was the overthrow of the Ostend Company. The merchants and navigators who by that event were deprived of employment, and many of whom, being Dutch and English, were prevented by the rigour of penal laws from returning to their own countries, sought with eagerness some other port whence they might still conduct their operations in security. Some were induced to visit Stockholm; and Henry Koning, an opulent merchant of that capital, represented to the King the expediency of seizing at once an opportunity, which might never recur, of establishing an East India Company in Sweden. In 1731 he had the satisfaction to obtain a royal charter, granting to him and his associates for fifteen years the monopoly of trade to all countries between the Cape of Good Hope and Japan, under the condition that they entered no ports belonging to any European power without previously obtaining permission. Numerous privileges were guaranteed for the establishment and encouragement of the trade, which was placed under protection of the Swedish flag. In addition to this the establishment of the Company was notified to the States-General, as also that fundamental article of their charter, which forbade interference with the trade of any other European nation. After some delay the Dutch replied that, though unwilling to favour, they would not molest the rising Company, but would grant them every necessary succour.

With these assurances, Koning and his partners despatched two stout vessels to China. Both returned in safety, and though the profits of the voyage were far from excessive, they warranted the belief that subsequent expeditions would be attended with better success. After this experiment, for about half a century, during which the Company were in existence, they appear, on an average, to have annually equipped two vessels of large tonnage, and to have managed a trade which was fairly remunerative. The majority of the partners, however, and of those connected with the Company, were, to the very last, foreigners, and the Swedes frequently grumbled at the employment of so many strangers, taking, as they barbarously supposed, the bread out of the mouths of their own countrymen. To appease this discontent, the Company made a regulation that two-thirds of the crews of their vessels should be native Swedes; it was, however, generally found impossible to obtain even this limited number of properly qualified seamen, a fact which induces a very humble idea of the maritime enterprise of Sweden in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Company's charter was twice renewed, once in 1746, and again in 1766, on which occasion they were compelled to lend the Government no less than 150,000*l.*, a sum which, when the extremely limited nature of their trade is taken into consideration, appears enormous.

Their imports consisted almost entirely of Chinese commodities, and especially of tea, which was sold for the purpose of being smuggled into England. When,

however, this clandestine trade was destroyed, in 1784, by the British Parliament reducing the duties upon tea, the commerce of the Swedish Company was almost annihilated. Ships were no longer despatched annually, but at intervals of several years, and at the beginning of the present century the Company's trade, which had gradually diminished, ceased altogether.

Of the other states on the Baltic, the *Prussians* have, on two occasions, attempted to trade with India from their port of Emden, in East Friesland. In 1750, certain English, Dutch, and Frenchmen, setting at defiance the laws of their respective countries against adventuring in foreign East India companies, under the title of "*The Asiatic and China Company,*" obtained from Frederick the Great a magnificent charter, replete with every commercial privilege. After an existence of three years, the partners closed the accounts, and discovered that the annual profit upon their transactions had amounted to the ridiculous sum of one-half per cent.! Another Asiatic Company for trading to Bengal was soon afterwards enrolled with similar privileges, but with somewhat better success. Vessels were sent at intervals to India and China; and, like the Danish and Swedish companies, their largest profits were obtained by the importation of tea for the English smugglers. At the commencement of the present century the disturbances of the Continent, and the political condition of Prussia, interfered with their trade, and in 1803 their voyages ceased altogether.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COMMERCE OF THE DANES WITH INDIA.

THE earliest records of the northern nations of Europe are full of the exploits of nautical heroes. They represent the inhabitants of the coasts at the entrance to the Baltic, as the most fearless and enterprising of navigators. Whilst the renowned seamen of the republics of Italy, and the islands of the Mediterranean, crept from shore to shore, the Danes and Norwegians launched boldly into the deep, and, unaided by the guiding influence of the magnet, dared all the terrors of the most stormy region of the Atlantic. Directing their course by the uncertain indications of the ever-varying winds and currents, or more often still, by the flight of ravens and crows, which they carried with them, they steered for the distant shores of Iceland and Greenland, *then*, as its name implies, a verdant land, enjoying a milder climate than at the present day. It is singular, however, that, notwithstanding all this early maritime energy, and though they inhabited countries well adapted for European commerce, they should have never taken any very active part in the trade of the East. Their feeble attempts we will briefly notice.

The Danes, in 1612, organized their first Company for trade to the Indies, under a charter granted by Christian the Fourth. They appear to have first attempted to form a settlement at Ceylon; but, failing in this, they landed at Tanjore, on the coast of Coromandel, and were allowed by the Rajah of that district to occupy Tranquebar, a small village on the coast, and afterwards to protect it by building the adjacent fort of Dansburg. Induced by the advantages of trade, and by the equity, with which the Danes conducted their commercial transactions, the natives flocked to the new factory, and ships of various nations resorted to a port, where trade was conducted on liberal terms.

This prosperity continued but a short time; for at home the Company's affairs were disarranged, partly by the Thirty Years' War, but especially by that which was being waged between their own country and Sweden. In spite of extraordinary prudence, they were compelled, in 1624, to surrender their property to the Crown in payment of a debt. In this condition their affairs languished, until the suppression of the East India Company of Ostend gave them fresh hopes of success.

In 1728, the Company was reconstituted; fresh rights and privileges conferred upon it; and a new India House established at Altona. Its proximity, however, to Hamburg, and its advantageous position, at the mouth of the Elbe, for commanding the inland trade of a considerable part of Germany, aroused afresh the jealousy of the Dutch and English, who had combined

for the destruction of the Ostend Company. This opened the eyes of the Danes, who appear not to have discovered them before, to the vast advantages likely to accrue from the new trade in which they were engaging, and the funds of the Company rapidly rose. Political circumstances, however, obliged their King to remove the emporium from Altona, and thus to disappoint all the sanguine hopes of the Company.

What might have been the effects of an Oriental trade conducted by Denmark from that town, may be a useless, but by no means an uninteresting, subject for reflection. When we consider that it was their India trade, conducted at the mouth of rivers, affording ready water communication with the interior of Europe, which, as much as their fisheries, or perhaps any other circumstance, obtained for the Dutch an opulence and political importance, so disproportioned to the size and natural resources of their country, we are not unnaturally led to the conclusion, that if Denmark had persevered in making Altona her depôt for Indian commodities, she might, in conjunction with the merchants of Hamburg, have acquired a considerable share of that commerce, and the political importance which has always attended it.

The removal of the India House from Altona, as we have said, materially injured the prospects of the Company. In 1732, they received another charter, placing their trade under regulations as prudent as they were advantageous. They were confirmed in their possession of the port of Dansburg and the town of Tranquebar;

their transactions were to be entirely free; their ships were to be on no account arrested, either in time of peace or war; they were to be exempted from all harbour dues, Sound dues, and similar charges; and the commodities which they imported were to be subject to a duty of only one per cent. Notwithstanding these and other privileges, the commerce of the Company never became very extensive. Although they joined in the trade to China, and established factories in Bengal, the Nicobar Islands, and the coast of Malabar, they were never enabled to send on an average more than two vessels to Europe annually. They suffered, too, enormously from shipwrecks, having lost no less than thirteen vessels out of the sixty which were despatched to India between the years 1733 and 1753.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century their chief profits appear to have been derived from the importation of tea, which was sold to individuals, who made it their business to smuggle it into Great Britain, where the duty was then ruinously high. At this period their dividends amounted to 10 per cent., a limit which they probably never exceeded. On the reduction of the English tea duties, however, this branch of their profits failed; and though in a war, in which almost every other European nation was involved, they gained greatly by the neutrality of their country, on the cessation of that, in 1807, their affairs were ruined. They were deprived of their settlements in India, their ships taken, and their trade suspended. At the general peace they were again put in possession of Tranquebar; but they have hardly

recovered, much less increased, their former inconsiderable commerce.

It cannot be expected that the results of such a trade should be very marked. The period of Denmark's greatest prosperity was previous to and during the neutrality, which she cultivated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was then that she was engaged in supplying the smugglers of Britain with the produce of China. In this trade, which involved at the outset a long voyage, and could only be brought to a prosperous issue by a series of contraband transactions, which required the greatest vigilance and the most undaunted nerve, some of the finest seamen of Europe were trained. We find the Danes, notwithstanding all the wealth and attention which the French in the last war bestowed upon their navy, possessing, next to Britain, the strongest and best-manned fleet of all the Continental states. It is no difficult matter to trace the rise of this naval power to the practice of long voyages, and the management of the large ships which were required by her trade to India and China. But, besides introducing, in a limited degree, wealth into the country, and thus giving a stimulus to its manufactures and mercantile transactions, it would be scarcely possible to indicate any other marked effects, which her commerce with India produced upon the social or political condition of Denmark.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

At a moment when a *de novo* legislation for the whole of India is occupying the attention of the English nation, it may not be amiss to remark cursorily upon our present commercial relations with that vast peninsula. The conquests of our armies, the enterprise of our merchants, and the researches of the learned, have given us a thorough insight into the government, the means of revenue, and the whole civil and social condition of the native states, ancient as well as modern.

That India is still, and ever has been, a poor country is the first point which prominently arrests the attention. This fact is now no longer concealed by the immense fortunes, which are occasionally attained by the native merchants of Calcutta or Bombay, or by the present and still more the traditional splendour of her monarchs. The wealth and grandeur of Akbar and the Great Moguls, their huge armies, their thrones of gold, and their courtiers sinking beneath a weight of emeralds and diamonds, are discovered to have been but the glittering excuse for national indigence and individual

poverty, more wide-spread and pinching than any that has existed under the so-much-abused dominion of a company of merchants.

Many are the reasons which might be alleged for this depressed condition. Something, no doubt, is due to the apathy and indolence of a people, enervated by the climate of the tropics. Much has been owing to the insecurity of property, arising from bad government, and the numerous and devastating wars, to which India has always been subject. But the grand cause of all, that which has depressed native and excluded foreign enterprise, is to be found in her being destitute of accessible markets for her surplus productions. This, as a natural consequence, has rendered her a small producer, for none will toil to create commodities, which, when obtained, are valueless.

A great portion of the peninsula, to the shame of our Government be it said, is absolutely devoid of roads or canals for the conveyance of heavy merchandise. In some districts, the bridle-roads and jungle are impassable for one half of the year, and, even still, infested for the other half with cutthroats and bandits. As might be imagined, the expense of carriage, for even the lightest wares, is something ruinous. The cost of conveyance renders the transportation of goods to suitable markets impossible, and in consequence none are produced, but those which find a ready market at home.

"Sixteen times as many men," says a recent writer[1] on the resources of India, "in proportion to load and

[1] Chapman's "Cotton and Commerce of India," p. 108.

distance, are employed as in England; fifteen of these are probably waste, occasioned by the rude imperfection of the means of transit; or, making every possible allowance for the comparative inefficiency of labour in tropical climates, eight or ten of them may reasonably be classed under that category. If all the rest of the business of the country is done in a ratio of disadvantage, at all approaching to this, it is clear that India produces but a very small part of the annual value of which her population is capable.

"Hence, the articles she can best and most cheaply produce, India often cannot export at all from the districts best fitted for producing them, entirely through cost of carriage—as, for instance, wheat, linseed, hemp, cotton, all of which, notwithstanding every disadvantage, may be had cheaply and in great abundance in the interior, but which often cannot bear the cost of carriage to the coast, whether for export or consumption."

Again, the want of markets, easy of access, has rendered India not only a small, but also a rude producer. Every process, both in agriculture and manufactures, is conducted with immense waste and want of ingenuity. The most simple methods of saving toil are unknown. Hence, whenever she has come into competition with Western nations, even in those manufactures which are peculiarly her own, she has been supplanted. India is the native country of the cotton plant, yet of the 600,000,000 lbs. imported into this country she furnishes not more than 60,000,000 lbs., and this of the most inferior quality.

Her fine muslins, the produce of the looms of Dacca and Chunderee, those "webs of woven wind," which have been the admiration of all ages, and furnished poets with many a simile, are superseded by the fabrics of Manchester and Paisley.

"A piece of the finest Chunderee muslin," says the writer[1] quoted above, "of only five yards long and half a yard wide, costs as much as ten pieces of muslin seven yards long and a yard wide, carried to the vicinity of Chunderee itself,—that is, a fabric, little if at all inferior, is produced 10,000 miles off, and carried to the spot, for about one twenty-eighth part of the price. Rice, sugar, indigo, and silk, all indigenous products of India, and the ancient objects of her commerce, have undergone the same supplanting."

Innumerable are the disadvantages which attend upon such a state of affairs. Either all inducement to enterprise and energy is removed, or if it exist it is misdirected and misapplied. Capital has no outlet, and is locked up in some districts by hoarding, on a scale of almost incredible magnitude. At Poonah it is currently reported that, in the houses of the Mahratta sirdars, sums are hoarded in actual silver, varying from 7 to 19 lacs of rupees, *i. e.*, from 70,000*l.* to 190,000*l.*[2] Such a fact speaks volumes for the cramped energies of a country.

To these causes of the poverty of India, must be added the recurrence of the most awful and devas-

[1] Chapman's "Cotton and Commerce of India," page 109.

[2] Ibid. page 111.

tating famines, not unfrequently accompanied by some terrible pestilence. In most parts of Europe a failure of the crops in one district can be supplied by the superfluous produce of another, so cheap and so efficient are the means of carriage for heavy merchandise. In India no such means exist. Food is transported from place to place by the brinjarries and their oxen. A year of scarcity is a year of drought. The cattle would find no forage; and, independent of other expenses, a large proportion of the grain which they were conveying would be consumed on the route.

With such facts before us can we wonder that India is poor, and that her commerce is limited? The little island of Hayti, notwithstanding its proximity to the United States, its frequent revolutions; and its political relations with France, annually consumes no less[1] than six shillings per head of our manufactures, whilst India, of which we are not merely governors, but in a considerable degree the absolute and irresponsible landlords, barely receives one-fourth of that sum. What, it will be inquired, is the remedy for such an anomaly?

A system of government, however well arranged, however admirably contrived, can never of itself render a country rich or prosperous. Our legislation for India may be just and impartial, but if we desire to increase her capital and commerce, some more active undertakings are requisite. It is our duty as

[1] Chapman's "Cotton and Commerce of India," p. 137. This is only a rough guess, but sufficiently accurate.

well as our interest, to supply her with internal means of communication. Markets for her immense and varied produce will then rapidly be found; external commerce will quickly follow; the factories of Lancashire will be supplied from Surat and Calcutta with cotton, as long and well-picked, as that which is produced by slave labour in the deadly swamps of Louisiana and Missisippi; the gold-hunters and pastoral population of Australia will be fed with grain grown on the banks of the Ganges and Indus; immense mercantile relations will spring up between this country and her vast Oriental possessions; incessant communication will result. Mutual interest will bind us not merely nation to nation but man to man; we shall be personally and individually associated with them. Then may we hope for the results of our energy and civilization to be found in the prosperity of India; then may we expect the great and diversified good, which seems designed by Providence to arise from our connection. With the inhabitants of Australia, New Zealand, and India as our fellow-citizens, and the three millions of China as our faithful allies, we may hope to be as we have been, the nucleus of the commerce and civilisation of the world.

By the establishment of a constant communication, not only between this country and the East, but between different parts of the East, we shall give capital to and develope the resources of India. More than this, where our cotton and our sugar and our rice

are grown, thither our creed and social system will penetrate, and be more effectually and widely diffused than by its being the system of the ruling caste, or by our possessing a purer ritual or a truer theology. Such we may expect to be the results of increasing the means of our external and internal communication with India.

Let there be railway communication in India, and its immediate results are not difficult to conjecture. The hoarded wealth of the sirdar will no longer remain dormant. There will be a rustling in the dry bones. The engine, like an electric shock, will rouse up energy, which few have suspected to exist beneath the swarthy skin of the Asiatic and the burning sun of the tropics. India may then no longer possess the prospect of irredeemable poverty. Her boundless resources will be developed, and new wants will be created. Her myriads will look to our workshops and factories for the implements of toil and the adornments of luxury. The importance and magnitude of such a commerce defy calculation. The vast political power, with which it would invest this country, we leave to the imagination to portray.

The realization of every project for ameliorating the condition of India hinges upon one circumstance — the increase of the means of internal transit. "There is," says a recent writer[1] on this subject—"hardly a consideration connected with India, and with our concern in that country, which does not ultimately con-

[1] Chapman's "Cotton and Commerce of India," p. 361.

duct us to this question." The solitary Christian missionary may be gradually (as, under God's blessing, he is,) undermining her varied systems of idolatry and false belief, but as long as he is cut off by the obstacles of time and space from the centres of civilization, he will toil for centuries before he generate that public opinion, which will at once effect their general suppression. Bring her people, however, into closer contact with Christendom—not simply with a solitary missionary, but with thousands for whose intellectual and personal vigour they feel a ready respect—and we shall soon see the systems of Brahma and Budh melt away before Christianity, like snow before a summer's sun.

To the philanthropist never was a wider field laid open. Increase her internal means of communication, and we grant her the power of quietly and effectually remedying the evils and the abuses, which have been engendered by countless wars and unnumbered generations of tyrants.

Increase the internal means of communication between different parts of the peninsula, and capital and commerce will be engendered, which will speedily increase and accelerate the external means of communication—those between Europe and the East. Mighty was the revolution in the India trade, which Hippalus effected by the discovery of the route by the monsoons. Wonderful were the political changes, which resulted from the discoveries of Vasco di Gama. The mere transmission of our overland mail through Egypt and down the Red Sea, is not without political effect upon the

countries through which it passes. What will result from some route still more direct, and traversing regions still more important?—Unlock the fettered capital of India: and such will presently be required by the ordinary necessities of her commerce.

The general direction[1] of such an undertaking it is probably not difficult to conjecture. It will traverse those portions of the Austrian and Ottoman empire in Europe which are at present the most barbarous, and in which the elements of enterprise and freedom are only repressed by bad government and the want of ready intercourse with the rest of Europe. It will pause in that city, which the imperial Constantine selected for the beauty and the salubrity of its situation, as well as for its splendid harbour and its advantageous position for commerce, as the most excellent of all the cities of the East. It will then direct its course across those regions of Asia Minor, once so teeming with population and wealth, now so unknown and deserted. Possibly it may even reach Syria, as did the commerce of antiquity, through the Armenian gates. It may linger for a moment on the pleasant banks of Abana and Pharphar. It will thence strike across the Syrian deserts. Tadmor, as of old, will supply the weary traveller with shade and water. The whole plain of the Euphrates and Tigris will be traversed. Persia and Beloochistan will be crossed,

[1] Since this was written, a railway has been planned, and is not unlikely to be partially carried out.

and at Hyderabad, in the Punjab, it will meet with the wares and merchandise of India.

This may be pronounced a day-dream, but let civilization and commerce and enterprise advance as they have advanced, and a few generations, possibly our own, will see our wild and magnificent dream a "fait accompli."

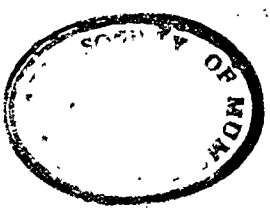
What may be its results we dare hardly imagine. Regions, for ages buried and deserted, will again play a part on the world's stage. What that part may be time will unfold. Civilization will revisit her home. The steam engine—the grand means of dispersion—will encounter on the dismal banks of the Euphrates the ruins of that monument, reared within a few generations of the deluge for the express purpose of making men of one name, that they might not be "*scattered* abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Strange, mysterious, awful thought! The old and the new world—the present and the past, with all their ideas so widely different —will meet as it were face to face.

Let the steam engine traverse Asia from end to end, and then we may expect to experience more fully the blessings of free commercial intercourse. Then may we hope for that prosperity, and that liberality of sentiment, and that general and wide-spread civilization, which naturally results from great and close connection with foreign nations. What calamities may at first arise, from the political commotions, which such a change in the direction of our Indian commerce would effect we

forbear to conjecture. The greater blessings which it will insure to the human race is a more agreeable subject of contemplation. If it require but the years of a short generation for its accomplishment I would venture with the poet to wish—

> "O, mihi tam longæ maneat pars ultima vitæ,
> Spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta!"

With these remarks upon the final route to be pursued by Oriental commerce, we bid adieu to our subject.



THE END.

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